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THE RECOLETOS OBSERVER

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Disciplined, Dauntless and Trustful Hearts in the **Pandemic**

**A project of life and mission that
becomes an oblation of love**

Prior General on the occasion of the 432nd Anniversary
of the Augustinian Recollection



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The Cover

An artistic interpretation of the Church observing health protocols imposed by the state in time of pandemic. And at the same time keeping the missionary zeal alive in the exercise of duty and apostolate particularly in the context of an Augustinian Recollect.

Lay-out

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Disciplined, Dauntless and Trustful Hearts in the Pandemic

The pandemic has brought damaging upshots for the year 2020. But amid the damages, the uncontrollable circumstances, the problems, and uncertainties, the religious of the province learned to do whatever could be done trusting in God's providence and always aware that even a pandemic is not stronger than God and His love for us. We did not lose heart. Some were 'scarred' by the virus but we are not scared. The virus did not keep us from pursuing our vision and mission, our ministries, and our apostolates.

For over a year now, we have survived; not because we are invincible. It's just that we refuse to be weak. More importantly, behind our face masks are disciplined, dauntless, and trustful hearts so cared for by a loving and compassionate GOD.

As we continue our journey in these trying times, always remember what the Lord God said: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sins and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

In our anguish, when everything is almost shaken, let us return to the Lord in total surrender. His words will stand forever . . . that's what He promised . . . and that, He will fulfill.

We **dedicate** this issue to the religious, and the lay faithful, especially the front liners, who put their lives at risk. They are not on the frontlines for money, prestige, or praise. Beyond the call of duty, they demonstrate how people can still choose kindness, generosity, compassion, and love.

covid 19

MESSAGE ...

Message of Prior General on the occasion of the 432nd Anniversary of the Augustinian Recollection

*Fray Miguel Miró, OAR
Prior General*

Happy Anniversary!

“With gratitude and hope we celebrate on December 5 the Anniversary of the Augustinian Recollection. After 432 years, the restlessness of those brothers who at the Chapter of the Augustinian Province of Castile expressed their desire to live a more evangelical life with poverty, prayer and apostolic service, remains alive in our hearts.

The strength of the Order's history is expressed in its ability to generate change. The charism that we have received is a transforming force that leads us to confront ourselves, through stories, with the life of those brothers and sisters who, open to the Spirit, initiated it by living their union with Christ with passion. They made of charism their path of dedication and holiness.

I exhort the entire Augustinian Recollect Family – men and women religious, fraternities, RAY youth – to respond with joy to the Lord's call and to renew our commitment to dedication and service. A renewal that is not mere words, but a project of life and mission that becomes an oblation of love in the life of each day.”



EDUCATION ...

Bishop Buzon leads UNO-R Mass of the Holy Spirit

Bacolod Bishop Patricio Buzon, SDB, DD, led the Mass of the Holy Spirit last September 30, 2020 at the Oratory of St. Nicholas of Tolentine at 10 am. The Mass was also livestreamed via Facebook. The theme was “Come Holy Spirit, Come Father of the Poor”. In his homily, Bishop Buzon said, we must always be faithful to God like Job whose fidelity to God was tested. Today’s pandemic is a test of our faithfulness to God. We have to be aware of the presence of God in our lives. The pandemic has taught us that we are helpless without God. He also reminded everyone of the spirituality of stewardship and the celebration of the season of Creation.



IT Grads get Taiwan grant

Two USJ-R graduates of BS Information Technology - Bien Grenier Sasing and Ma. Thea Cabral-received a masters program .scholarship from Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology (STUST). They are pursuing Master of Science in Electrical Engineering with specialization in Internet Of Things (IOT) in Taiwan. Sasing and Cabral are expected to finish in 2022.

USJ-R Dean joins webinar in Biodiversity

CEBU CITY- USJ-R Dean of the College & Graduate School of Education and CESD Center Director Dr. Jestoni Babia recently joined as panelist the UNESCO-sponsored seminar on biodiversity. He discussed the school’s initiatives on biodiversity. The event

gathered around 18000 pre-registered educators and interested individuals with the intention to make everyone aware of science education efforts on the environment specifically on biodiversity - the theme for this year’s World Environment Day.

Cooperation Agreement

MANILA—De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde and San Sebastian College -Recoletos de Cavite signed a memorandum of understanding last February 20,2020, formalizing cooperation in teaching, research, and academics. De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde Chancellor Robert Tang and

San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite Vice President for Administration Fray Rommel L. Rubia, OAR, signed the agreement. Coordinators for the interaction between the institutions, namely, Mr. Mark Humphrey Mendoza, DLS-CSB Academic Linkages Office Director, and Mrs. Maria Soledad T. Tubay, Institutional Advancement, Parents and Alumni Relations Director.



CST-R celebrates *La Salud* Feast; welcomes new priest

SAN CARLOS CITY—“As we experience these natural disasters and this pandemic, we pray to our Blessed Virgin Mary that she will always console us,” Fray Monday Benjamin Edobor, OAR, said in his homily in honor of Nuestra Señora de la Salud last November 17, 2020. Fray Edobor led the community of Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos, Inc., in honoring La Salud at the St. Ezekiel Moreno Covered Court. The CST-R community also welcomed Fray Edobor who is set to head the Community Extension and Development Office (CEDO).



The community of Augustinian Recollects in San Carlos City warmly welcomes Fray Edobor, who is one of the first two Nigerian Recollect priests ordained in the Philippines. Fray Rafael Cabarles, OAR, Fray Vicente Ramon, Jr., OAR, and Fray Renier Alviola, OAR, concelebrated during the Holy Mass.

Digital art contest

On Facebook and the Web via www.cstr.edu.ph, CST-R successfully celebrated the feast days of Saint Ezekiel Diaz Moreno, Saint Augustine and Saint Monica with students participating in a Digital Art Medium contest. A tenth grader, Aaron Gabriel C. Ybañez, won the contest



with his original work featuring a remorseful Saint Augustine holding the hand of a dying Saint Monica. Ybañez used Jump Paint design application to create his art.

The winning digital art by a Grade 10 Thomasian features a remorseful Saint Augustine holding the hand of his dying mother, Saint Monica.

Primer for ‘New Normal’ classes

CEBU CITY--With the pandemic in mind, the University of San Jose – Recoletos reimagines the way of providing quality education to its students through flexible learning which works online and offline. The University has launched #REACH4You as the hashtag for this initiative. To “REACH” means: R–Redefining academic excellence E–Enriching quality

teaching A–Achieving sustainable learning C–Championing peer-to-peer collaboration H–Honing lifelong skill set. USJ-R SHS partnered with Quipper Philippines for its learning management system (LMS). The colleges will be using the Adelante LMS. The Elementary and Junior High Departments will be using Genyo and Aralinks, respectively.

Mass of the Holy Spirit for SSC-R Manila and Canlubang



The Mass of the Holy Spirit was held at the Basilica Minore de San Sebastian Manila last September 16, 2020. It was offered to the Sebastinian communities of SSC-R Manila and Canlubang campuses as a celebratory welcome to the new school year 2020-2021 and as a gathering to call on God’s Spirit for inspiration in the upcoming school year. Rev. Fr. Nemesio D. Tolentin, OAR, the College President, was the main presider and concelebrated by the OAR priests.

Online Christmas lighting

CEBU CITY—The University of San Jose-Recoletos last December 1 launched online the lighting of the main campus for the Christmas season. Vice President for Finance Fray Leopoldo Estioko, OAR, pushed a star button that activated all of the Christmas lights in USJ-R. Among the decorations inside the campus were a 50-foot-high LED Christmas tree, a belen, dozens of parols, and colorful christmas lights on trees.



UNO-R welcomes Fray Romeo Ben Potencio, OAR

UNO-R recently welcomed Fray Romeo Ben Alteza Potenciano, Jr., OAR, to the university community and thanked Fray Teodulfo Jadulco, OAR, for his generosity during his stay at the university. Fray Pots, as he is fondly called, was born on November 5, 1975 in Iriga City. He had his simple profession on April 24, 1999; his Solemn Profession on June 16, 2002; his diaconal ordination was on December 9, 2002. He was ordained priest on December 5, 2003. He earned his AB Philosophy in 1997 from Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in Baguio City, his Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STh.B) from Recoletos School of Theology, and affiliate of the Royal and Pontifical University of Sto. Tomas, Manila in 2003. In 2009, he earned his Licentiate in Patristic Science from Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Rome, Italy. Today, he is assigned at UNO-R as Director of Religious Education Department and is under the supervision of the Vice President for Religious Affairs. (President's Memo No. 25, series of SY 2020-2021)





School of Law launches LLM Program

The School of Law launched the Master of Laws program in consortium with the San Sebastian College –Recoletos Graduate School of Law last February 5, 2020 at the President’s Hall of the university. Law School Dean, Atty. John Paolo Villasor explained the program and the rationale of taking up Master of Laws. He said that this is the first and the only program available in Negros Occidental. Fray Don Besana, OAR, University President, gave the inspirational message. He also inspired Law professors by offering the St. Augustine scholarship specific to the professors of the UNO-R School of Law.

SSC-R Manila, U20 sign agreement

San Sebastian College-Recoletos (SSC-R), Manila and The Belt and Road Union of 20 Nations for Advanced Personnel Development (U20) Qingdao, Shandong Province, China, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on February 11, 2020 . The agreement calls for cooperation in education programs and exchange programs for students and teachers. SSC-R Manila was represented by Rev.

Fr. Nemesio D. Tolentin, OAR, School President (seated second from left) and Rev. Fr. Henry H. Santiago, OAR, Vice President for Finance and Administration(seated extreme left), while Mr. Guo Huixing, TEM CEO/Vice Secretary-General (seated third from left), represented the other party, while Mr. Johnson Legaspi, TEM Liaison & U20 Director (seated extreme right) looked on as a witness.





Thanksgiving Mass at UNO-R

Seven new Augustinian Recollect priests held their Thanksgiving Mass at the Oratory of St. Nicholas of Tolentine at 4:30 pm, January 7, 2020. The Thanksgiving Mass was led by Fray Ifeannyichukwu Maximillian Omem, OAR, together with his six religious brothers and other concelebrating Priests. Fr. Omem was assigned to UNO-R during his immersion year. The other new priests are Fray Jorr Rabacal, OAR; Fray Monday Benjamine Edobor, OAR; Fray Jovy Gallego, OAR ; Fray Andrie Puate, OAR; and Fray Jessriel Marcha, OAR.

USJ-R to use a New Intl Educational Platform

CEBU CITY--In the first semester of academic year 2020-2021, USJ-R students in the tertiary and graduate school levels including the School of Law will be using a customized Adelante Learning Management System (LMS) powered by Brightspace LMS. Brightspace LMS is a cloud-based software used by millions of students and thousands of K12 schools and higher educational institutions for online and blended classroom/flexible learning across the world. Singapore Management University, Deakin University, Victoria University, Purdue University and the Departments of Education of New York, Iowa, West Virginia and Calgary have been using Brightspace as their central LMS.



Blended Learning Training Workshop

BACOLOD CITY—UNO-R held last May 2020 a training program for teachers to help them in blended learning. The topics discussed were “Rudiments of Blended Learning; Learning Management Systems; Blended Learning Approaches, Material/Course Preparation; Course Content Planning, Curating, Strategizing and Transmitting. The lecturers-facilitators were Dr. Elmer Haro; Mr. Ariane Torres; Ms. Mary Gift Dionson and Mr. Markh Jamandre.

Josenian Educators win at CHED-ASEAN Tilt

Five faculty members of the USJ-R School of Education (SED) bagged multiple awards in the recently concluded CHED ASEAN competition for best teaching models in the context of the pandemic. The theme of the competition organized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was “*Call for Teaching Models in Philippine Schools at the Time of COVID-19 and Beyond: A Competition for Excellence and*



Resiliency in Education.” Chairperson Ionell Jay Terogo of the University’s Department of Teacher Education (DOTE) was named as champion in the Best Teaching Model Implementer – Synchronous Approach. DOTE Instructor Rhonnette Abatayo won as champion in the Best Teaching Model Implementer – Asynchronous Approach category. Rex Villavelez of DOTE also won First-Runner Up in the Best Innovative Instructional Design Concept through the use of the Internet.

UNO-R’s OAR Foundation Day activities

BACOLOD CITY-UNO -Recoletos President Fray Don H. Besana, OAR, in his Advent message on December 5, also 432nd Foundation of the Augustinian Recollection, thanked God for the gift of vocation. The day started with the solemn profession of Sr. Mary Grace Gicos, OAR. Members of the Augustinian Recollect family renewed their vows to God. It was also the virtual commencement exercise for graduates who, Fray Besana said, the university is sending to the world equipped with love and knowledge. There was also a musical, gift giving and the ceremonial lighting of Christmas lights, a practice started by the late Fray Cornelio Moral OAR.



The President speaks. Fray Don Besana, OAR, UNO-R President discussed the gift of vocation.

Japanese scholarship

CEBU CITY--Engr. Varie John Orozco, an alumnus and part-time faculty of USJ-R Civil Engineering Department, qualified for the MEXT Scholarship of the Japanese government. MEXT stands for Monbukagakusho (Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). Orozco is currently studying in Japan to get his masters degree in Geotechnical Engineering at Hokkaido University.



CST-R holds virtual graduation

SAN CARLOS CITY --One hundred and seventy-two Thomasians graduated from senior high school through a televised commencement exercises last June 14, 2020. Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos Batch 2020 is considered the “pandemic graduates.” They are led by rank one student Dionabeth Mamugay who is the first top notch student from the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) Strand.

Top debater

CEBU CITY--Corina Encabo, a professor of the USJ-R College of Arts and Sciences, emerged as top debater in a tournament held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Although she hails from the Philippines, Encabo represented Barbados in the academic discourse which centered on how to proliferate education to children in conflicted areas. She also participated as a volunteer in the Macau International Work Camp on June 12-21 last year. As an international volunteer, she helped organize the Na-Tacha Festival and was educated on heritage conservation.

Kumpilan, Agape at San Sebastian

CAVITE CITY--The Sacrament of Confirmation was administered by Most Reverend Reynaldo G. Evangelista, DD, Bishop of Imus, held at the Recoletos 4th Centennial Gymnasium, February 17, 2020. In his homily, Bishop Evangelista invited the attendees to reflect on the Holy Spirit’s role in the areas of power, life, and mission. After the Mass, participants proceeded to Cañacao Campus for the agape.



“Zoomustahan Na”: Virtual Group Sessions

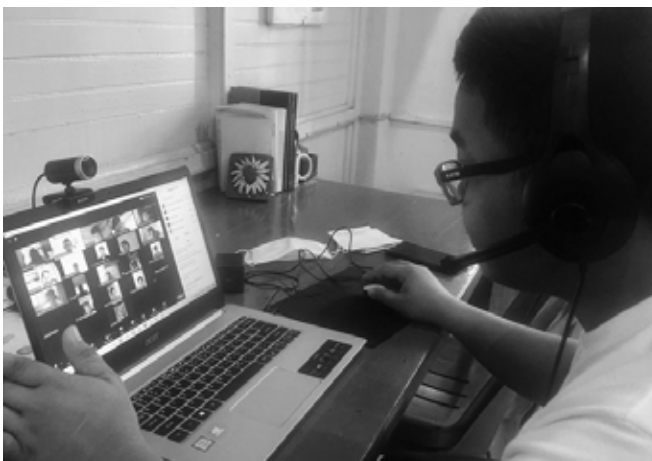
SAN CARLOS CITY —Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos Student Development and Placement Center officially began conducting the Student Help and Resiliency Program (SHARP) through Zoomustahan Na last October 26, 2020. Zoomustahan Na is a virtual venue where students meet up and check on each other’s well-being with the CST-R SDPC as facilitator. SHARP is a newly adapted remote education and formation program under iSupport SDPC Assist that focuses on group counseling to build resilience among students who are now coping with distance learning at a time of a pandemic.



Wheel of Names. Zoomustahan Na enjoy the online games during the ice breaker session

CST-R’s holistic approach to distance learning

SAN CARLOS CITY—How does a Recollect school mitigate the blows of an unprecedented pandemic? After the Philippine government declared lockdown last March 2020 to stop the spread of COVID-19, Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos started preparations for long-distance learning by hosting an online orientation for parents last August 15, 2020. It received the approval



from the government to open the schools on August 24.

The school also established Academic Hotlines for parents and guardians who cannot access the school services using the Internet.

Thomasian teachers started to conduct mock online classes a week into school opening.

Students went through trial run including lessons on online class etiquette in preparation for the digital classes. The school also has a

handbook on how students should observe internet protocols and courtesies. It also came out with TLMS Primer designed to help parents and guardians implement modules effectively at home.

Members of CST-R Supreme Student Council also met online and began mapping out new student programs.

CST-R also launched iSupport—the Student Support Online Services. iSupport is a team made up of the Student Development and Placement Center (SDPC), CST-R library, school clinic, Office of the

Prefect of Discipline, Office of the Academic Coordinator and the Campus Ministry Office (CMO). For the alumni and outgoing students, the Office of the School Registrar is available online.

At the heart of iSupport is the T.R.E.A.T.S.S. principle—Thomasians Respond to E-learning with Activities, Training and Support Services. Here, guidance and counselling services are made available online and continue to be personal and customized to individual student concerns. The school clinic will continue to facilitate medical-dental consultations throughout the school year. The library will begin to migrate online and sources are now linked as e-books. Academic consultation for students with learning challenges will be delivered through available modes of communication.



74 Papers on life of St. John Paul II

Seventy-four abstract papers were presented at the three-day John Paul II Centennial International Conference Cebu in 2020. Academicians, researchers, students, and the religious joined the conference about the life of John Paul II. The papers were about “Life and thoughts of John Paul II: The man and saint who transformed the modern world.” The John Paul II Society of the Philippines was also launched on January 17. The event was co-organized by the Societas Ethica Philosophica, Philippine National Philosophical Research Society (PNPRS) and Rogationist College Seminary – Cebu. University of San Jose- Recoletos was the venue host. It was conducted on January 16 to 18.



UNO-R turns 58

On May 25, 1962, the University of Negros Occidental (UNO) was turned over to the Order of Augustinian Recollects. UNO then was renamed as the University of Negros Occidental – Recoletos (UNO-R). The university was first known as Occidental Negros Institute (ONI), founded by Dr. Antonio Lizares and Dr. Francisco Kilayko in 1941 in Talisay. It closed during World War II but re-opened in 1946. It was named UNO in 1957 after being given university status. The first Rector of UNO-Recoletos was Fray Federico Terradillos, ORSA. Today, Fray Don Besana, OAR, is the university president. UNO-R's patron saint is St. Nicholas of Tolentino.



SSC-R celebrates 79th Year of Foundation

San Sebastian College – Recoletos, Manila celebrated its 79th Foundation Anniversary last January 18 to 24, 2020. It started with the Grand Alumni Homecoming where a wellness booth gave free check ups and reading glasses. Prior Provincial Fray Dionisio Q. Selma led the concelebrated mass during the feast of St. Sebastian, January 20. There was a host of singing competitions and concert showdown during the week-long festivities. An outreach for victims of the Taal Volcano eruption was held on the second day. Intramurals followed. Two books

-St. Ezekiel Moreno: Studies on his Missionary Activity in the Philippines and St. Ezekiel Moreno: Augustinian Recollect Icon of Holiness in the Mission- were launched. . Prof. Emmanuel Luis A. Romanillos, author, signed copies of the books. Loyal employees were also given awards. The last day of the 79th Foundation Celebration started with an interfaith prayer for unity and peace. Grade school students held dance exhibits. The celebration was capped by a Students' Night with Viva singers as guests.



79 Years of SSC-R



80 Years of CST-R

Colegio de Santo Tomas- Recoletos celebrated in 2020 eighty years of educating Negrenses with Recollect Values. CST-R was first called Sto. Tomas de Villanueva Institute as a high school for boys in 1941 but turned coed in 1971. In 2016, CST-R opened its Senior High School Department. It will open its college department by 2021.

Fray Vicente Ramon, OAR, explained the school's logo (CST-R at 80) created by Jazer Jude Jakosalem. The logo prominently features the figure eight that represents eight decades

of CST-R presence in Negros Island, eight decades of the never-ending quest for scientia or knowledge. When flipped horizontally, the figure becomes the infinity sign which signifies that CST-R is timeless. 'Our school has rolled with the times and has seen the growth, development, downturn, and re-birth of what is now San Carlos City. The flaming pierced heart is the Augustinian Recollect ensigna that stands for CST-R's treasured Augustinian Values. The noble Philippine Eagle symbolizes vision, nobility and patriotism', Fray Ramon said.

CST-R hosts SCCPSA Webinar Series 2020

SAN CARLOS CITY —Colegio de Sto. Tomas-Recoletos, Inc. hosted the first of a series of webinars sponsored by the San Carlos City Private Schools Association (SCCPSA) last November 7, 2020. “Stress Management Tools in the New Normal” featured Dr. Junrel Zarco, Vice-President for Academics of Asian College of Technology-International Educational Foundation, and Dr. Jerald R. Jumao-as from Cebu Normal University. Six SCCPSA schools joined the virtual event including CST-R, Colegio de Sta. Rita, Tañon College, Daisy’s ABC School Foundation, Our Lady of Peace Mission School and Our Lady of the Mountains Mission School. Each school registered at least 15 faculty members.

SSC-R, Manila gets Institutional Accreditation

The Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) through the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) awarded an institutional accreditation to San Sebastian College- Recoletos Manila, affirming the SSC-R’s high-level quality in all aspects of its operation. The institution is already a Level III accredited for its Arts, Sciences and Business Administration Programs; Level II for Computer Studies, Information Technology, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, and Accountancy programs; and Candidate status for MBA and Ph.D. programs. The Grade School and Junior High School departments of the institution likewise hold a Level III status respectively.

RELAY Conference

BACOLOD CITY --The offices of the Vice President for Religious Affairs and Vice President for Student Welfare led the Religious and Lay (RELAY) Conference last February 21 at the Presidents’ Hall. Fray Amadeo Lucero, OAR, UNO-R VP-Student Welfare, gave the welcome remarks focusing on love. Moreover, Fray Cristituto Palomar, OAR, VP-Religious Affairs, gave spiritual input to the assembly. He stressed on the Recollect identity of each one. Fray Palomar shared the UCDO, Campus Ministry and the Religious Education (UCARE) programs of these offices under his supervision. On the other hand, Fray Don Besana, OAR, University President shared that this year and the coming years. UNO-R shall follow the 3E’s which are Evangelization, Excellence and Extra mile. He reminded the body that “Evangelization” will be the leading program of the university.

FORMATION ...

Augustinian Recollect Formation revitalized

The second meeting of the School of Formation 'In Imum Cordis' concluded with the general feeling of revitalization in the formation of the Augustinian Recollects.

ROME--After two weeks of living together and learning, the second edition of the School of Formation of the Augustinian Recollects 'In Imum Cordis' ended February 22, 2020.

On the last day, the participants agreed that the process they underwent was a vital and important part of the revitalization of the Augustinian Recollect charism. The School of Formation, organized by the General Secretariat on Formation, aims to renew the formators themselves and that indirectly also benefit the formation of future Augustinian Recollects.

The meeting revolved around four main themes. First was personal accompaniment. Participants learned counseling techniques and practiced on how to accompany people who approach them. José Carlos Bermejo was the main speaker.

They also touched on the importance of families in the development of the vocation. And, as explained by the psychologists María Jesús Boticario and Cristina Pérez, the father and mother of the religious can affect community life and formation. This issue led to a task: that the formators should work with the families of formands during the formation process.

The Prior General addressed the third of the main themes: the Augustinian Recollect



Charism in formation. Fray Miguel Miró, OAR, spoke about the interiority and service of the Augustinian Recollects to the Church. It was a day of reflection.

Abuse prevention was the last of the subjects discussed. This fell on Daniel Portillo, priest and member of the Commission on the Protection of Minors of the Order of Augustinian Recollects. The relationships of power that may exist between formators and formands were reflected on and how this can lead to situations of abuse of power or sexuality.

The Augustinian Recollect formators also had the opportunity to have a talk with Mons. José Rodríguez Carballo, Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The bishop responsible for religious life encouraged everyone to take care of the different aspects of formation for religious life. The Prior General was present at the gathering.



The School of Formation 'In Imum Cordis' does not conclude with this meeting. The formators will continue working throughout the year on the issues discussed in this second edition. The project and the tasks do end with the meeting. The tasks will continue beyond and all outputs are to be channeled to the third meeting, which will take place next year.

(The original Spanish article was posted in the official website of the Order of Augustinian Recollects www.agustinosrecoletos.com)

CaReS donates 28 bags of blood amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

BAGUIO CITY--The demand for blood has always been higher than its supply. This is a fact known only too well to Roselyn Reyes, a Medical Technologist III at the Baguio General Hospital Medical Center (BGHMC). "The need for blood reaches approximately 50 units (bags) a day at BGHMC alone," she said. "On ordinary days, we could collected 40 units a day. There is a deficit, yes, but we got by because people were willing to help." This, however, changed drastically during the pandemic. "Because of Covid-19, we would be lucky to get 15 bags of blood a day," Reyes said. "People no longer go to hospitals to donate blood for fear of contracting Covid, aside from the fact that their movement is restricted under the pandemic." To increase blood collection, Reyes said the Department of Health is intensifying its mobile blood donation campaigns by sending medical personnel to barangays and private establishments.



Roselyn Reyes (seated) and the medical staff of BGHMC in a photo opportunity with seminarians of Casiciaco who donated blood last June 17, 2020.

Reyes and her team were at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary last June 17, 2020 from where they were able to get 28 units of blood. Some 48 formators and seminarians volunteered to donate blood but only 28 qualified. "We would like to commend our 'wounded soldiers' for

saving lives this morning by donating blood," Fr. Ralph Laureen S. Ciceron, OAR, said during the post-lunch announcements at the refectory.

The college prefect of discipline was a one-time recipient of blood transfusion that saved his life after contracting dengue. He and Fr. Joseph Philip Trayvilla, OAR, were among the blood donors during the bloodletting activity. “We do not wish any reward in return but the reward of eternal life,” he added. “Who knows that by donating blood, we also inspire another person’s vocation.” Fr. Ciceron claimed that he seriously considered his religious vocation after having

recovered from dengue. “Blood donation is a social responsibility.”

Reyes stressed the importance of donating blood especially during the pandemic when blood transfusion is needed for treatment of COVID. “I hope that people realize that blood donation is a social responsibility. We need to help others in need because we do not know when we need help ourselves. The next person in need of blood could be our relatives,” she said.

Five Friars profess Simple Vows amidst Covid Pandemic

ANTIPOLO—The Coronavirus pandemic is forcing cities and nations into border lockdowns and citizens into isolation. And yet it could not stop the Prior Provincial, Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, from welcoming into the Order of Augustinian Recollects five young men who made their simple profession of vows at St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos (SEMoNoRe) last June 27, 2020.

“Your profession of vows is unique, it will be remembered in history because the backdrop is the pandemic we are experiencing right now,” Fray Selma said in his homily.

Those who professed their simple vows were Fray Mark Joseph Quirante, OAR (Quezon City); Fray Joseph Neil Baygan, OAR (Jagna, Bohol); Fray James Esplanada, OAR (Cainta, Rizal); Fray Judd Galinato, OAR (Guindulman, Bohol); and Fray Mc Airel Capinpin, OAR (Brooke’s Point, Palawan) Fray Baygan delivers his thanksgiving message in behalf of his batchmates.



The solemn rites were done without the usual attendance of family members, relatives, and benefactors but were streamed live on the official Facebook page of the Province. In a message of gratitude just before the mass ended, Fray Baygan said: “the current pandemic may have caused your absence but you are still with us, in the Spirit of the Lord, the agent of our communion”.

The night before the Rite of Simple Profession of Vows, the candidates renounced their familial inheritance through a simple rite presided by the Prior of the Community, Fray Paulino Dacanay, OAR. Fray Dacanay said this renunciation shows



total dependence on God's providence. "Have faith and confidence in God. Be assured and confident enough that God is always there even in the most difficult situation", he said. .

In his homily, the Prior Provincial talked about the relevance of religious life in today's highly secularized society. "There is sickness in the world, and the religious are called to be spiritual therapists," he said. Fray Selma enumerated excessive materialism, sexual liberation and the false concept of sexuality, and the false concept of freedom as symptoms of the world's illness. The three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he added, are what counter-remedy such maladies. Fray Selma: "There is sickness in the world, and the religious are called to be spiritual therapists."

"Material wealth, sexuality, and freedom are all good and they are not to be despised, but we profess our vows because we know that there is a higher good than all these: the Lord himself, his kingdom," Fray Selma said. He added that the religious vocation is a gift inasmuch as not everybody can receive it. Unlike God's Commandments which are obligatory,

the profession of the evangelical counsels, he continued, is voluntary. "By our vows, we are trying in our lives to irradiate the light and the person of Christ, telling the people who would see us that the life beyond, the eschatological life, can already be lived in this world," he said. He encouraged the young friars not to be afraid because it was the Lord who called them despite their weaknesses and imperfections. "God does not call us because we are good, but because of His love. He calls us because he is entrusting us with the mission of continuing his saving works," he said. The religious, he added, is not exempt from life's crises. And

so when crises hits them later on, The Provincial advised them to always go back to their vocation story, to the moment when they experienced



a "particular, special, personal encounter with Jesus" which prompted them to offer themselves to the Lord in the religious life. Indispensable in the perseverance in religious life, he said, is cultivating an intimate relationship with the Lord in prayer life, and having a "personal, continuous, and consistent conversion". "Yes, we feel unworthy and sinful just like Augustine our father. But the Lord would say, 'I am calling you, this is not your work, you are just my representative,'" he said.

Formators' Day a tribute to teachers

Jesse Meer Alipes

BAGUIO CITY – Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary held the 2nd Formators' Appreciation Day last October 5, 2020.

The celebration coinciding with World Teachers' Day, was a tribute for the lay formators in the seminary. "Giving the opening remarks for such an occasion is not difficult," said Rev. Fr. Bernard Amparado, OAR, Seminary Rector. "This is because my mother was also a teacher and to give tribute to teachers is the same as giving tribute to my mother," he added. Despite the exhausting job of his mother, his mother persevered because "teaching is not only a profession, or a livelihood. Teaching is a vocation, a mission and passion," and the same goes for the lay formators of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary Fray Amparado said.

"The extensive formation to priesthood of the seminarians should not be left only to the care of the religious formators, hence the help of the lay formators is indispensable," Fray Amparado said.

The seminarians performed during dinner complete with a video presentation prepared by the Academics and Documentation Committees. "I am super happy and I appreciated the program," Ms. Kristine Avecilla, First Year college instructor

said. Ms. Avecilla said that teaching in the seminary is a stress reliever because of the engaging classes and the cooperativeness of the seminarians.

After the program, the religious and lay formators witnessed the inauguration and blessing of the new faculty lounge administered by Rev. Fr. Joseph Phillip Trayvilla, OAR.

Rev. Fr. Anthony P. Irineo, OAR, Seminary Dean of Studies, also extended his gratitude to the teachers in his closing remarks.



Fray Amparado's mother was a teacher and it was easy for him to pay tribute to teachers knowing how much they sacrifice for others.



Confraternidad de Jesus Nazareno dancing to the beat of "Sway"

Sala de Estudio inaugurated on the Feast of St. Thomas of Villanova

Jesse Meer E. Alipes

Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary inaugurated and blessed Sala de Estudio last November 25, 2020 on the feast of St. Thomas of Villanova. Rev. Fr. Bernard C. Amparado, OAR, Seminary Rector, blessed the newly-renovated Sala de Estudio or study room and learning resource center.

Fray Amparado together with Fray Anthony P. Irineo, OAR, Seminary Dean of Studies and Senior High School Principal, cut the ceremonial ribbon. The renovation of the Sala de Estudio is the initiative

of the office of the Dean of Studies and the Academics Committee to offer more study areas for the seminarians' intellectual formation.



F. caption: Fray Bernard C. Amparado, OAR blesses the Sala de Estudio.

Before the event, the seminarians participated in the Quiz Bee in celebration of the Feast of the Patron of Studies of the Order of Augustinian Recollect, St. Thomas of Villanova. The winners of the Quiz Bee are as follows: First, Confraternidad de Jesus Nazareno; Second, Confraternidad de Divina Misericordia; and Third, Confraternidad de Cristo Rey del Universo.

Declaration of official names of seminary facilities

Along with the inauguration and the blessing of the Sala de Studio is the declaration of the official names of seminary facilities during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in honor of the saint.

Fr. Amparado declared the official names of the following facilities: Sala de Estudio- Sto. Tomas de Villanueva, for Tomasino Hall; Sala de Conferencias- Talavera de la Reina, for Social Hall; Biblioteca Fray Luis de Leon, for the main library; Clinica de Sta. Rita de Cascia, for the seminary-school clinic; Sala de Docentes- Sta. Magdalena de Nagasaki, for the Teacher's Lounge;

Aula de Ordenadores- Martires de Motril, for the computer room; Laboratorio de Lenguaje- Cinco de Diciembre, for the speech laboratory; Aula de Beato Francisco de Jesus, for classroom 1, after the clinic; Aula de Beato Maria de San Jose Alvarado, for classroom 2; Aula de Beato Martin de San Nicolas, for classroom 3; and Aula de Beato Vicente de San Antonio, for classroom 4.

The Rector expressed his aspiration that the facilities act as silent witnesses to the Recollect identity and mission as "Creators of Communion, Witnesses of Gospel Values, and Men of Hope."

Fourteen new aspirants join CaReS

Br. Jesse Meer E. Alipes

BAGUIO CITY – Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary welcomed last August 21, 14 new aspirants for formation year 2020-2021. The 14 neophytes arrived at the seminary grounds at around 2:00 p.m. aboard the bus chartered by the seminary. The newcomers were welcomed by seminarians who sang and danced at a safe distance two animation songs: Greatest Dream and Magpapari na.

The newcomers this year are as follows: Heljen Lance C. Acha, from Bohol; Alan Dale V. Adel, Palawan; Kent C. Año, Palawan; John Vel B. Candar, Cebu; Fortune B. Cano, Rizal; Lyland P. Cañezares, Cebu; Christian Joseph T. Codilla, Cavite; Jon Midred S. Duran, Davao; Pious F. Garcia, Bohol; Ken Joshua S. Manalo, Quezon; Eivan Earl Martinez (a returnee), Quezon City; Kevin Mark C. Ola, Quezon; Daniel Ray A. Perez, Baguio City; and James Sarilla, Albay.

After the ceremonial fraternal welcome, the neophytes underwent disinfection and interview before their admission to the quarantine facility. Like the returning seminarians, the neophytes will undergo the 14-day quarantine period mandated by the city government of Baguio.



Seminarians perform their theme song “Magpapari Na”

The neophytes earlier met at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish in Quezon City then they were fetched by a bus chartered by the seminary. “This is a first for everyone,” said Fray Alan Jacinto, OAR, the National Vocation Director, who arrived at the seminary the following day, when asked about the vocation promotion in the midst of a pandemic. “From the first months of the year, the

vocation campaign in schools were already limited. I was not allowed to meet large audiences because of the threat of infection. So I decided to administer the exams online,” Fr. Jacinto said. “Yet, nothing could compare to the experience of conducting interviews face-to-face than just doing it online, since there are places that cannot be reached by the internet”, he said.



Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary has a total of 74 formands as the 14 new seminarians join the 59 returning seminarians and one adult vocation aspirant from Vietnam.

RFC/RST Covid19 Update

MIRA-NILA -The Quezon City Government, through Barangay Pasong Tamo, had twice disinfected and sanitized the infrastructures and vicinities to Recoletos Formation Center, Recoletos School of Theology, and Our Lady of Consolation Parish

The disinfection occurred June 16 and 22, 2020. The first was done after one of its members and three other employees were found positive of COVID-19. The second was done even after the swab test results (Nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab) of community members and employees were negative.

RST-RFC and Our Lady of Consolation Parish were declared free from Covid-19 by Jobelle Ong Atienza RMT, Head of Barangay Health Emergency Response Team and given permission to open operations and services.

All efforts have been done to assure safety of the seminary, the school of theology and the parish of Our Lady of Consolation.



Province receives 21 new postulants

BAGUIO CITY – The Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno of the Order of Augustinian Recollects received 21 postulants last October 12, 2020, at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary on the same day the seminary celebrated the feast of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, its Patroness.

“Man is Homo Simbolorum (Man of Signs) and the habit is the external sign of your consecration to God,” said Rev. Fr. Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, borrowing the words of St. John Paul II in his homily. Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, was the main celebrant of the Mass.

The wearer of the habit must be constantly conscious of who he is since the people are reminded of Jesus Christ through the habit. “Am I staining the habit? How am I behaving when wearing the habit?” These are the questions Fray Selma prompted the candidates to constantly ask themselves.



Fr. Provincial also admonished the postulants of the danger of wearing the habit for the cause of extravagance. “One of the immature motives of wearing the habit is to boost one’s self confidence due to lack of attention,” he said. At the end of his homily, Fray Selma invited the seminarians to ask God the grace to be grateful to Him.

The 21 formands belong to batch Altruists and Seraphs (Third Year and Second Year College seminarians), respectively. Five of them comes from the Altruists while the other sixteen comes from the Seraphs.



After the liturgical celebration, a program was held in the refectory exclusive for the members of the community due to health protocol restrictions.

Unlike the past years, the seminary decided not to receive visitors from the family and friends of the seminarians to safeguard the health of everyone in the community.

“Despite the seeming handicap we are still celebrating with a blast. For a long time, it was just until now that the seminary has again accepted 21 candidates for the Toma de Habito,” said Fray Bernard Amparado, OAR.

Fray Amparado, Seminary Rector, expressed his hope that this celebration may inspire the postulants to persevere in their vocation

“We pray that this memory inspire you all the more to continue on the road to the religious vocation. May you never stop hoping that someday, the white habit will be donned with a chausuble and a stole. Congratulations! Tuloy lang ang laban.”

Province receives six novices

—You are isolated, but not detached from the world. This was the message of the local Prior of St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos (SeMoNo-Re) to the six members of Batch Martyrs who were formally received into the Novitiate Formation Year during the Mass of July 16, 2020, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

“The novitiate is where you dedicate yourself to prolonged time of prayer and contemplation, so that you may encounter God and learn whether or not you are for this way of life,” said Fray Paulino Dacanay, OAR in his homily. “And yet,” the prior continued, “I want you to remember that we are connected with one another, that



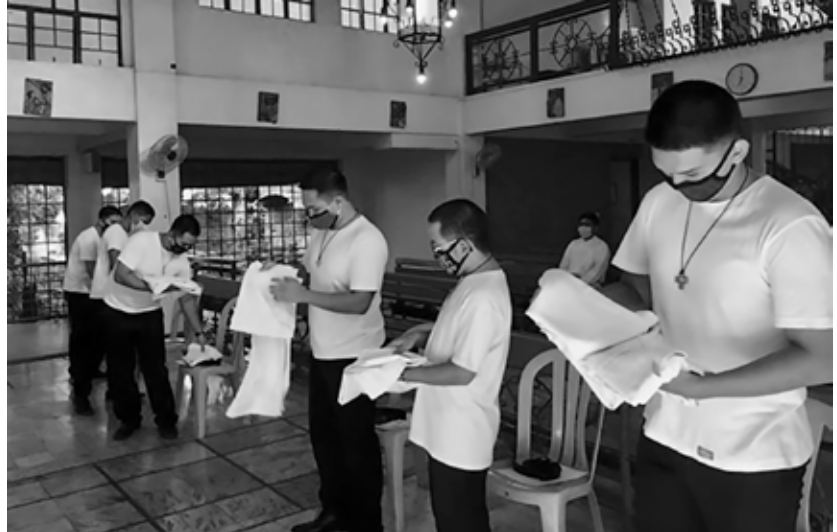
we have one soul in Christ. And so we continually pray for one another, especially our brothers and sisters afflicted by Covid-19.”

The six new novices for this formation year are Fray John Arnold P. Lozada (Zamboanga City); Fray Seiji L. Ishii (Baguio City); Fray Roldan T. Benemerito (Badian, Cebu); Fray Mark Angelo C. Diaz (Puerto Princesa City); Fray Lloyd Jorem E. Terania (Bayawan City, Negros Oriental); and Fray James Francis M. Bago (Banga, South Cotabato). They are joined by Fray Chrislean Rey R. Pamilaga, a holdover from the previous batch, giving the Province seven novices in all.

“You are now in the initial stage of religious life,” Fray Dacanay said. “I hope you will learn to love the Order.”

Fray Benemerito, in an interview the night before, said he feels the “weight of the moment”.

“I understand that we will be isolated from the world for a year to find ourselves in the hands of God. And yet it has not yet really sunk in. It is hard to find words to describe what I feel. It’s just that the weight of the moment can be very overwhelming,” he said.



As the rite falls on the feast of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Fray Dacanay reminded the novices that going to Jesus through Mary is always the wise way. “Our Lady will always be with us in our encounters with the Lord,” he said. “The gentle voice of Christ will always be heard through her.”

According to the Plan of Formation of the Order, the novitiate is the stage of formation which provides proximate preparation of the aspirant for the religious life of the Order. Its two-fold

purpose is for the formand to grow in the knowledge of his vocation, and to be able to identify with the specific life of the Community (Plan of Formation 242).



For this formation year, SeMoNoRe has seven Novices and five Pre-Novices. Fr. Dacanay will be aided in the formation program by Fr. Emeterio Buñao, OAR (Spiritual Director); Fr. Roland Cepe, OAR (Master of Novices); Fr. James Castelo, OAR (Pre-Novice Director); Fr. Charlie Orobia, OAR (Procurator); and Fr. Joel Villaruel, OAR.

Returning seminarians undergo fourteen-day quarantine

BAGUIO CITY– “During a pandemic we have to be safe,” Dorothy Joy Panelo, RN, Seminary Nurse, told returning seminarians last August 3, 2020. “We cannot tell who is the carrier of the virus,” she said. “We should follow protocols like the use of footbaths, wearing of PPEs, and disinfection.”

Following the health protocols set by the city government of Baguio, the returnees will undergo a 14-day strict quarantine that will end on August 17, 2020. The first batch of the returnees composed of 21 seminarians are from the Luzon. They met at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish in Quezon city where they were fetched by a convoy chartered by the seminary.

Dorothy Panelo interviewed the seminarians before their admission to the quarantine facility. A dormitory located on the



A volunteer seminarian disinfects the valuables of the returnees.

second floor of the new building of the seminary was used as the quarantine facility.



Bro. Justine Luis Zafra, a second year seminarian, said he can now somehow relate to the frontliners. “No matter how worse the news is about the pandemic, nothing can compare to experiencing it firsthand,” he said. “Wearing all these PPEs and following all the necessary protocols made me understand the difficulty of being a frontliner.” Bro. Zafra is one of the volunteer seminarians tasked to attend to the needs of the returning seminarians in the quarantine facility.

A week before the arrival of the seminarians, the volunteers underwent training with Dr. Justina Calibuso, MD, Seminary Physician, regarding disinfection of the facility and wearing of PPEs.

RFC Coristas receive Ministries of Lectors and Acolytes

MIRA-NILA --"Why is it we have ministry? Because it is our response to the call of God and to continue His mission but most especially to serve His Church and because of Him who called us," Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial, amplified in his homily on the occasion of the institution to the ministries of Lectors and Acolytes last May 30, 2020 in St. Thomas Villanova Chapel, Recoletos Formation Center.

Fray Selma, OAR, exhorted the candidates not to lose the focus of offering their lives to the Lord as lectors and acolytes in view only of ordination. They should follow the Lord always "because of the life he has given us."



Fray Neil Robert M. Alilain, OAR, and Br. Roldan A. Diego, MMMP, were the newly instituted Lectors. Fray Helfrid D. Palmis, OAR; Fray Jose Enrico V. Gallego, OAR; Fray Rey Jay Y. Quevedo, OAR; Fray Renz Calix C. Soriano, OAR; Fray Jhoben M. Rodriguez, OAR; Br. Joselito B. Dumogho, MMMP; and Br. Brien T. Panagsagan, ESHT were the newly instituted acolytes.

Prior to their institution to the ministries, there were series of lectures given about the rudiments, spirituality and history of the ministries. After these laborious phases and steps of learning and relearning, they went through eye of a canonical inquiry. The institution of the brothers is a testimony that they successfully hurdled another stage of their religious and priestly formation.

Frays Barrot, Espartero take over RST major posts

MIRA-NILA HOMES --Fray Leander Barrot was recently appointed as the new Rector of the Recoletos School of Theology (RST) in Mira-nila, Quezon City, while Fray Ian Anthony Espartero was appointed as the new Dean of Studies.

These major tour of duties came about in view of the demands "to foster the development of RST into a 'Center for Theological and Augustinian Studies, Culture and Spirituality in the Province,'" said Fray Lauro Larlar, quoting the

Life and Mission Project of the Province for this quadrennium.

Fray Larlar voluntarily tendered his resignation as rector "to give way to the Vice-Rector, whose managerial skills and love for

the school of theology are truly what we need today.” With this, he deemed his resignation as “necessary.” On the other hand, Fray Espartero took over the deanship formerly held by Fray Radni Caparas as the latter had taken further studies in London.

Last June, RST received the good news namely, the renewal of its affiliation with the

Faculty of Theology of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) for another five years. This approval by the Congregation for Catholic Education “was an added impetus for our collaboration as we continue to improve the academic standards of RST for the service of the Church,” noted Fr. Rodel Aligan, OP, Dean of USTs Faculty of Theology.

RFC Coristas renew vows amidst Pandemic

MIRA-NILA -Your renewal of your religious consecration tonight, dear brothers, appears irrational to many people who cannot understand the vowed life that you have personally embraced in your lives,” said Fray Ian Anthony R. Espartero, OAR, Vicar of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, to the ten simply professed friars who renewed their vows last June 25, 2020 at St. Thomas of Villanova Chapel, Recoletos Formation Center.

After almost two weeks of no communal activities, except the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, due to on-doing community quarantine, the community was gathered for the Rite of the Renewal of Vows which took place after the community Rosary and Vespers. Fray Espartero, OAR, was delegated by the Prior Provincial to accept the vows of the brothers and with him as witnesses were Fray Lauro V. Larlar, OAR, Seminary Rector and Fray Kenneth Joseph L. Onda, OAR, Master of the professed.

Fray Espartero, OAR, explained that evangelical counsels can only be appreciated if they are seen in their transcendental value: “Religious life does not make sense unless God is the first point of reference in our life and apostolate. Unless God and His kingdom are our primary and immediate concerns, we cannot prosper in our religious life.”

The Simply Professed religious who renewed their vows are the following:: Fray Neil



Robert M. Alilain, OAR, Fray Helfrid D. Palmis, OAR, Fray Jose Enrico V. Gallego, OAR, Fray Rey Jay Y. Quevedo, OAR, Fray Renz Calex C. Soriano, OAR, Fray Jhoben M. Rodriguez, OAR, Fray Ricky John A. Austria, OAR, Fray Ivan C. Cuison, OAR, Fray Jhyryx Vincent F. Gamulo, OAR, Fray James Erolid P. Gatinao, OAR.

The Vicar of the Province challenged the 10 newly renewed friars: “We draw our existence and relevance in the radical witness of our vowed



lives. It is the ability to encourage others like the critical yeast during this trying time. We are called in the church to become the agents and prime movers its transformation and renewal, discovering the cutting edges and welcoming new possibilities. We are to inspire and to keep the fire of the Gospel burning brightly in the hearts of men and women with care, commitment and love.”

RST opens with new mode of learning

MIRA-NILA —Recoletos School of Theology opened its horizon to online teaching for Academic Year 2020-2021, adapting to the new normal under a pandemic.

Prof. Mark Joseph T. Calano, PhD of Ateneo de Manila University, conducted a seminar workshop on Learning Management System and on the Principles for Online Learning last July 6, 2020. The seminar workshop equipped professors and students to the rudiments of online teaching and learning system with the help of several platforms like Canvass, Google Classroom, and Schoology.

Calano explained that current academic demands would be different with new classroom set-up and the new online manner of delivering instructions. He called for balance among the content (subject matter), coach (teacher), and cohort (community of learners) in order to achieve holistic learning despite the changes in methods.

Present during the seminar were the resident faculty of RST together with Dean of Studies, Fray Radni L. Caparas, OAR; the Prior Provincial, Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR; other visiting professors and Recollect Theology Students.



Prof. Calano (left) receives Certificate of Appreciation from RST Dean of Studies, Fray Caparas, OAR (right).

Prior General breathes encouragement to Recollect Formators

ROME--The formation of religious in its initial stage is fundamental and important. That was one of the main messages that the Prior General, Fray Miguel Miró, OAR, left the Augustinian Recollect trainers in their meeting at the 'In Imum Cordis' Training School. Fray Miró accompanied the religious responsible for the different stages of formation throughout the day on Wednesday, February 19, and encouraged them to reflect on different topics.

The Prior General began his presentation by talking about the revitalization of the Order, in relation to formation. "Revitalization is a process of conversion given to us by being open to the new things of the Holy Spirit, whatever age you are," he said.

He said that "there is no revitalization without an encounter with Christ" and without fraternal life. He also said that the society and the Order are experiencing a change of era. Therefore, he asked to "look at the past with gratitude, live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope."

During the second part of the talk, the Prior General extended to the formators the invitation "to be prophets of the Kingdom." Fray Miró recalled the three vows: chastity, poverty and obedience. Finally, he talked about the formation process and the challenges today in this regard. Specifically, he asked for "a formative community," the need to train religious in a change of time, to accompany the human, spiritual and community process, and to give continuity to the processes.



After his talk he had a dialogue with the religious present at the Training School. Later, they maintained a time of reflection, both individually and by groups, finally shared with Fray Miguel Miró their main concerns. One of the most repeated concerns was to form the type of young man of today, with a different mentality to that of decades ago. He encouraged everyone to continue their work, without despair and accompanying each of the young people who begin and move forward in the formation process.

(Translated from the original Spanish article posted on www.agustinosrecoletos.org)

Formators gather for 'In Imum Cordis' second edition

ROME--About thirty Augustinian Recollect religious, responsible for formation participated in the second edition of the Training School 'In Imum Cordis', organized by the General Secretariat of Spirituality and Formation.

The objective is to study what are the current challenges and how to face them from initial stages to permanent formation of the religious.

The program was designed as accompaniment to reflect the Recollect characteristics of Interiority, Community and Church. In its second edition, those attending 'In Imum Cordis' will focus on personal accompaniment, training in families of religious origin, the Augustinian Recollect Formation Itinerary -IFAR- and protection of minors.

Likewise, the Augustinian Recollects will hold a meeting with Most Rev. José Rodríguez Carballo, DD, Secretary of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Attendees began their meeting at St. Peter's Basilica celebrating the Eucharist in the crypt of the Vatican Basilica, facing the tomb of the apostle. The Training School will run until February 22, 2020.

Speakers in the Training School 'In Imum Cordis':

José Carlos Bermejo-- Major Superior of the Spanish Province of Camilos, Director of the Center for Humanization of Health and the San Camilo de Tres Cantos Assistance Center, Doctor of Sanitary Pastoral Theology, he has a Master's Degree in Bioethics and Counseling.

David Songy-- Capuchin Friar, Doctor in Theology and Psychology. Director of the San Lucas Institute of the United States, a leading international institution dedicated in bringing the

ministry of healing of Christ to priests, deacons and religious consecrated Catholics through education and integrated psychological, spiritual and physical care.

Mary Jesus Apothecary-- Doctor in Clinical Psychology, Family Therapist, Psychotherapist and expert in Systemic-Relational Model in Social Treatment. Member of the Psychological Care team of Cáritas Madrid.

Cristina Pérez Díaz-Flor—Clinical psychologist, Family Psychotherapist and Teaching Supervisor of the Spanish Federation of Family Therapy Associations. Since its foundation in 1987, it belongs to the Family Orientation Center (COF - Central) of the Diocese of Madrid.

Daniel Portillo Trevizo-- Priest, graduate in Spiritual Theology and specialization in Priestly Formation at the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome. Currently, he is the Director of the Interdisciplinary Research and Training Center for the Protection of Minors (CEPROME). In addition, he is a member of the International Commission for the Protection of Minors of the Order of Augustinian Recollects.

(Translated from the original Spanish article posted at www.agustinosrecoletos.com)



PROFESSION AND ORDINATION ...

Fray Bitancor: Delayed but never extinguished

MIRA-NILA —Even in the midst of pandemic, Fray Ramon Bitangcor III, OAR, from Tagbilaran City, Bohol, solemnly professed the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience before the Holy Mother Church through Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, who received his profession.

Fray Monmon, as he is fondly called in the seminary, is the lone friar who made it to this stage of formation from the thirty-three hopefuls in his batch, the Seekers, who started their seminary formation last 2010.

The celebration was held at St. Thomas of Villanova Chapel, Recoletos Formation Center, Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City last November 7, 2020. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist was presided by Fray Selma, OAR, and was concelebrated by the formators from the said seminary, and priests from San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite, and Provincial Curia. The formands of

Recoletos Formation Center were all present while observing health protocols provided by the local government. The family and friends of the candidate, who were not able to attend physically the celebration, joined through live streaming via Facebook which was facilitated by the members of the Recoletos Communications, Inc. (RCI), the media arm of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.





In his homily, Fray Selma, OAR, said that one of the elements needed in this religious vocation is the clarity, on the part of the person, of the one to whom he gives his love. The reason is that the price of following God is very high. It demands renunciation not just of possessions and positions but even family ties for the Kingdom of God, the higher good. And the challenge that was given to the candidate is “to love as Jesus loves, serve as Jesus serves and to offer his life as Jesus offered his life.” These demands are not easy. For this reason, grace from God is to be consistently asked. Lastly, he challenged the candidate to be faithful to God’s call of love and ask his grace so that he may respond faithfully to the demands of following Christ.

“My heart is on fire. At the heat of this very moment, I feel enraptured by the warmth of God’s embrace as an important milestone in my religious life finally comes into fruition.” These were the opening words of Fray Bitangcor, OAR, as he gave his message of gratitude after the Holy

Mass. According to him, his experiences in this pandemic, from the preparations until the day of his profession, made him more resilient, patient, and looks at the sudden turn of events with a silver lining. He is now in his fourth year in religious life since he made his simple profession of vows in St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate- Recoletos last April 30, 2016.

As the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno turns 22 this coming November 28, this year’s Solemn Profession of Vows was the second time that the celebration was made inside the chapel of the seminary. The first friar to make his Solemn Profession of Vows in the said chapel was Fray Joel Dequilla, OAR, now a missionary in Taiwan, way back on February 27, 1999.

Originally, the schedule of the Solemn Profession of Vows was scheduled on September 19, 2020, Memorial of St. Alonso de Orozco. However, it had to be rescheduled due to the pandemic.

Fray Ramon Bitancor, OAR: A minister of the Word and the Eucharist

Mira Nila Homes, QUEZON CITY—A month after Fray Ramon Bitangcor, OAR, had his Solemn Profession of Vows, he was ordained to the Order of the Diaconate on December 5, 2020 on the occasion of the 432nd anniversary of the birth of the Augustinian Recollection.

He was ordained at Our Lady of Consolation Parish by His Excellency, Most Rev. Roberto O. Gaa, DD, Bishop of the Diocese of Novaliches. Bishop Gaa concelebrated the mass with the priests of the Order headed by Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.

Restrictions under the current pandemic resulted in limited attendance for Fray Bitangcor's ordination. But despite the few number of attendees, the celebration pushed through with great solemnity.

In a concise homily, the beloved bishop stressed that ordination is not a magical event that will transform everything. Rather, it is an affirmation of what one did and what one has become; in this case, the candidate for the diaconal ordination. Moreover, despite the weaknesses that Fray Ramon shares, he was challenged not just to accept and recognize them but to go beyond them. Thus, become a sign and symbol of transformation and conversion to all.

After the rite of ordination was completed, Fray Ramon joined the other ministers and assisted in the celebration as a deacon.

Fray Ramon said, when he delivered his words of gratitude before the celebration was ended, "Gihalad ko kini sa atong Labaw na Makagagahum. Everything I am, everything I do, everything I have rightly belongs to the Lord." He stressed that the office he now undertakes, in the



name of the Church, places a significant meaning to his life as nothing but God's property; a worker in his vineyard and a man not considered a slave under the law but a freeman under grace.

In the previous ordinations scheduled on the foundation day of the Order, before the dismissal, the renewal of the vows of the religious takes places and after which, the renewal of the promises of the members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity. However, so as not to require the members to congregate in big number inside the church, the renewal of vows and promises took place in their respective communities. This time, the members of the Recollect Augustinian Youth will join in the renewal since they already made their promises during their acceptance as regular members in the last National Recollect Augustinian Youth Summit held in Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary, Baguio City.

PASTORAL MINISTRY ...

Bishop Mesiona visits his flock in Inagawan, Palawan

INAGAWAN—Canon Law states “a bishop is obliged to visit the diocese in whole or in part, so that he visits the entire diocese at least every five years either personally or, if he has been legitimately impeded, through the coadjutor bishop, an auxiliary, vicar general, episcopal vicar, or another presbyter” (CIC 396.1).

The Apostolic Vicar of Puerto Princesa, Most Rev. Socrates Mesiona, MSP, DD, together with the Chancellor of the Apostolic Vicariate, Fr. Salvador Saturnino, visited the Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Inagawan last September 4-6, 2020.

The Bishop, as the shepherd of the whole Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa, met with the Parish Priest, Fray Urbano Galanido, OAR, the officers of the Parish Pastoral Council, and parishioners. The first day was marked by a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Bishop Mesiona.

On the second day, Mesiona visited all the chapels of the parish and dialogued with the parishioners. The chapels that he visited were Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel in



Kamuning; Saint Joseph Chapel in Piat Nga; San Antonio de Padua Chapel in Marambuaya; San Agustin Chapel in Tacduan; Santo Niño Chapel in Tagbarungis; and San Rafael Chapel in Tagumpay. He also celebrated the Holy Mass in Piat Nga and Tagbarungis chapels.

The Holy Mass was again celebrated at the parish church on his third day of visit. The Bishop also checked the important books of the parish and signed in the Book of Records his visit. Members of different parish organizations were able to have some photographs taken with their Apostolic Vicar.

The Dungaw of 2020

Fray Robin Ross Plata, OAR

MANILA—The annual tradition of the *Traslacion* of the image of Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno, also known as the Black Nazarene, was held last January 9, 2020.

The popular devotion which yearly attracts millions of devotees now includes the pious tradition of the “Dungaw.”

In the “dungaw”, tagalog for looking out the window in anticipation of an important event, the image of Nuestra Señora del Carmen de San Sebastian waits for the procession of the Black Nazarene to pass by the Basilica.



This touching encounter much like the *encuentro*, was revived in 2016. Gathered in Plaza del Carmen, Quiapo, the image of Del Carmen was brought out from the Minor Basilica of San Sebastian to pay tribute to the image of the Nazareno. In 2020, this encounter happened at around 4:30 PM--the earliest “Dungaw” since 2016. In the previous *Traslacions*, the image of the Nazareno would arrive in Plaza del Carmen at around 10 PM.



The rite of “Dungaw” was presided by the Rector and Parish Priest of San Sebastian Basilica, Fray Edgar Tubio, OAR, and was assisted by Fray Enrico Nacorda, OAR. Among the thousands gathered at Plaza del Carmen, Fray Dionisio Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial, and other friars from Recoletos de Manila and nearby communities, the Augustinian Recollect Sisters, who helped vested the image of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, were also present.

OLVP launches Sto. Cristo Divino Tesoro Caravan

URBIZTONDO—A caravan promoting the devotion to the sacred image of Sto. Cristo Divino Tesoro de Urbiztondo was launched on February 14, 2020. Led by the parish priest of Our Lady of the Visitation Parish, Fray Joseph Cyprian Panaligan, OAR, the community started the caravan at 6 AM celebrating the 95th barangay fiesta in honor of the sacred image.

The Recollect parish in Urbiztondo, in order to spread the devotion to the sacred image, invited nearby parishes to pray the novena in honor of Sto. Cristo Divino Tesoro. The caravan visited nearby parishes where parishioners were given a chance to venerate the sacred image. The first stop was in Senor Divino Tesoro Shrine, Calasiao, Pangasinan. Then at Sto. Domingo Parish in San Carlos City. St. Joseph, Husband of Mary Parish in Malacanang, Pangasinan was also visited. Then the caravan moved to St. Pius V in Urbiztondo before going to the Municipal Hall of Urbiztondo, its last stop.

In his short exhortation, Fray Panaligan reminded the people about the true value of their devotion towards the Sto. Cristo Divino Tesoro de Urbiztondo. He emphasized that “in this material



world, the most important treasure that we should consider is Jesus Christ Himself. He is our true wealth among any other material belongings that we possess. Certainly, He is our divine treasure.” Since the event coincided with Valentine’s Day, Fray Panaligan reminded the lay faithful about the true essence of love. He highlighted the symbol of the sacred image which reveals the self-less love of the crucified Christ for all of us. It was a call for all the faithful devotees to deepen their understanding of love, especially in this modern time.

SNDTP-QC brings Christ to parishioners

QUEZON CITY-- With the current threat of the Corona Virus (COVID-19), parishioners were advised not to attend the liturgical celebrations of Holy Week of 2020.. Instead, they were encouraged to participate in the celebration by staying in their homes and watch the live coverage of the celebration through social media.

The image of the crucified Christ was brought out into the streets within the parish jurisdiction on Good Friday, April 10, 2020. Fray Jonathan Caballero, OAR, parish priest of San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish, together with four newly ordained priests: Fray Jovy Gallego, OAR, Fray Benjamine Edobor, OAR, Fray Jessriel Marcha, OAR, and Fray Maximillian Omem, OAR, blessed the faithful with Holy Water as they passed by the streets. The parishioners were asked to bring with them a lighted candle and a crucifix so that they may be blessed as the “mobile veneration of the Cross” passed by their homes. Pandemic or not, parishioners went out to meet

the Christ hanging on the cross and raised their hands in prayer to receive His blessing.

The procession started at 5:00 PM after the Commemoration of the Passion of Our Lord was done within the parish church. As an observance of the guidelines set by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines and the Inter-Agency Task Force, only the members of the community of St. Ezekiel Moreno Provincial Center and some lay ministers who took the roles as choir and altar servers attended the liturgical service.

MISSION ...

2020 Marian pilgrimage in Taiwan

KAOHSIUNG —The month of October is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary specifically to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Hence, to manifest their deep devotion to the Mother of God, forty parishioners of St. Joseph Parish and Queen of Victory Parish, both in Xiaogang District, Kaohsiung City participated in a two-day weekend pilgrimage to the Catholic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Wufongci (in Yilan County) on October 24 to 25.



Fray Dequilla blesses Willi and Laura on their 44th wedding anniversary.

Fray Joel Dequilla, OAR, the parish priest of the two parishes accompanied the pilgrims, who departed from Kaohsiung City at around 7 in the morning of October 24. On the way to the final destination, the group visited the Carmelite Monastery of nuns in Hsinchu County to pray and talk briefly with the nuns. Soon after, the pilgrims went to Mount Carmel Parish, also in Hsinchu to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and eat lunch. Fr. James Yeh, OCD, concelebrated with Fray Dequilla during the Mass and delivered a mirthful but inspiring homily to the pilgrims.

Having been fed in soul and body, the group continued its journey towards the pilgrimage site and arrived there 15 minutes past 7 in the evening. The RVM Sisters (Religious of the Virgin Mary) who are currently managing the Catholic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Wufongci warmly welcomed the pilgrims. An hour after everyone has rested and settled down, the pilgrims gathered inside the Church where a short liturgy of the Word was held. Then, the group made a human rosary formation at the façade of the Church. Coincidentally, a group of Filipinos (Overseas Filipino Workers) from St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Nantze, Kaohsiung city were also present at the same pilgrimage site. Hence, they joined the rosary formation bearing candles in their hands. The participants spoke different languages and dialects. Hence, the holy rosary was recited in Chinese Mandarin, Taiwanese, Amis, and English. An ardent devotee of the BVM brought along her statue of Our Lady of Fatima. The statue, beautifully decorated with flowers, was placed at the center of the human rosary formation and afterward carried in procession towards the big grotto of the BVM for the final blessing.

Early at dawn the following day, around 3:30am, we started to walk towards the top of the mountain where the Stations of the Cross can be found. The trek was about 4.8 km from the main sanctuary where we stayed overnight. On our way, we recited the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. Interestingly, this Catholic pilgrim site has now evolved as a famous destination for hiking

aficionados due to its well-developed trails and its captivating beauty. Along the way, one can see pristine rivers and waterfalls. If one is lucky, sometimes monkeys and a variety of birds, and other wild animals are in sight. This pilgrim site was originally discovered and developed with ample help from Catholic faithful all over Taiwan by Bro. Luigi Pavan, an Italian Camillian brother who was a missionary in Yilan county. Catholic faithful donated money and even manually brought materials such as cement, sand, timber, nails, etc., to the mountaintop to build the structures currently present there. It took many years to build and develop the site which include the stations of the Cross, the statues, the resting place for pilgrims and even the hiking trails leading towards the top, but with perseverance and tenacity of Catholic volunteers and the generosity of donors, the place is now a destination not only for Catholic pilgrims but to thousands of people from all over Taiwan.



Pilgrims form the Living Rosary and recited the prayer in Chinese Mandarin, Taiwanese, Amis, and English.

Upon reaching our final destination, we were all brimming with pride and some shed copious tears of joy for overcoming the difficulties of the trek and reaching the Golgotha, the apex of the mountain where the crucifix stand. Many among our group, with misty eyes embraced the crucified Jesus perched at the top of the mountain. Drenched in our own sweat and the soft drizzle pouring over our bodies, we all huddled together around the Cross and prayed fervently. Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we poured our hearts, souls and minds to God in praise and thanksgiving.

Then a little while later, we headed back to the Church and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Fr. Joseph Tzao joined Fray Dequilla at the altar and delivered the homily. October 25, 2020 was a memorable day for everyone, but most especially for Fray Joel Dequilla, OAR, who on that very same day celebrated the 25th anniversary of his simple profession of vows as a religious of the Order

of Augustinian Recollects. A couple in our group named Willi and Laura were also celebrating on that day their 44th wedding anniversary. So, we held a simple ceremony of the renewal of their marriage vows.



After the Mass, we headed back to Kaohsiung reinvigorated and with hearts full of joy.

Ubuntu Africa: A Recollect response to Covid-19 pandemic

“Ubuntu” in the African culture (or “Osho” in Krio) describes compassion towards others. It also connotes the belief in the intrinsic goodness of humanity and the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.

Concretizing this cultural value (which is also a Gospel value), the Recollect missionaries in Sierra Leone have committed themselves to implement a two-phase response to alleviate the current situation of the crisis in their respective mission areas Kamabai and Kamalo.

First phase is prevention: “To prevent a toxic lockdown culture and a disproportionate response of the local people to the crisis.” Second is assistance: “To assist the poor (especially families of students at OAR-administered schools, and teachers who are not receiving salaries).”



Assistance extended: awareness seminars, prevention kits, food, etc.



arcoces



Saipan

Fray Leo Neil Bullos, OAR, parish priest, continues to intensify the Marian character of the parish through First Saturday devotion. Last September 5, through a motorcade, the image of Nuestra Senora de la Salud was brought around the communities within the parish.

OAR missionaries in Taiwan follow Church guidelines vs COVID-19 outbreak

KAOHSIUNG– In cooperation with the church’s efforts to help curb the outbreak of the COVID-19, the Augustinian Recollect missionaries administering five parishes in the Diocese of Kaohsiung followed the pastoral directives of the Chinese Regional Bishops’ Conference (CRBC) in Taiwan.

The Diocese of Kaohsiung, following the directives of the Chinese Regional Bishops’ Conference (CRBC) in Taiwan, released Pastoral Guidelines on Epidemic Prevention dated January 30, 2020.

Signed by Most Rev. Peter Liu, the said guidelines aimed “to ensure that the sacramental care for the faithful remains unaffected and allowing peace of mind in the continuance of receiving the holy Eucharist and other Sacraments.”

Fray Joel Dequilla, OAR, presided in the blessing of candles during the Solemnity of the Presentation of the Lord last February 2, 2020. Following the guidelines of the Local Ordinary of Kaohsiung, priests and the lay faithful wore face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It also laid down specific instructions for priests and the faithful to follow, such as wearing of face masks during the entire celebration of the holy mass and other sacraments, conscientious washing of hands, and availability of disinfectant alcohol in the church and other publicly used spaces within the church compound.



Furthermore, the CRBC also released an official Prayer of Deliverance from the coronavirus outbreak which should be prayed at every Mass.

The four-member community of Recoletos missionaries in Kaohsiung faithfully

Other precautionary measures taken were: no shaking of hands during greetings of peace, no offertory procession, : the Holy Communion must be taken by hand , imposition of ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday, kissing of the Cross on Good Friday, etc. were temporarily suspended.

The pastoral guidelines also enjoined the faithful “to cooperate with the government’s instructions during the epidemic prevention period and invites everyone to pray for those infected, quarantined and their families as well as the medical staff and those who care for the infected ones.”

continue to carry out the said guidelines in their parishes namely: San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish and Holy Cross Parish in Taliao; St. Joseph Parish and Our Lady of Victory Parish in Xiaogang; St. Augustine Parish in Linyuan; and the St. Ezekiel Moreno Chapel in Pingtung.

In spite of the scare brought about by this COVID-19 outbreak, the people in Taiwan although cautious, remain calm and confident about the country’s outstanding health care system and the response of its government in containing the spread of the dreaded virus.

Recoletos community in Indonesia formally established

QUEZON CITY – January 8, 2020 will go down in history as the “official birthday” of the first Recoletos community in Indonesia. That’s practically around sixteen months after the arrival of the pioneer group of Augustinian Recollect missionaries in this Muslim-dominated country.

Mission

It was on September 19, 2018, feast day of St. Alonso de Orozco, an Augustinian saint, when the two Recoletos missionaries – Frays Russell Lapidez and Dominador Mercador Jr. – first set foot in the Archdiocese of Pontianak in West Kalimantan



(Borneo). They were accompanied by no less than the Prior Provincial himself, Fray Dionisio Selma, and the Section Head for Mission Apostolate, Fray Edgar Tubio.

In compliance with the mandate of the 55th General Chapter and the Life and Mission Project (2018-2022) of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, the mission in Indonesia was opened, thanks to the cordial welcome of Archbishop Agustinus Agus. And thanks as well to Frays Lapidez and Mercado who, equipped with missionary experiences and fervor, blazed the trail and “broke ground” for what would become the first Augustinian Recollect community in Indonesia. Together with the newly-ordained priest, Fray Jovy Gallego, they comprise the Province’s 26th local community, which will later be headquartered in the district of Ledo, of the Bengkayang Regency.

Fray Lapidez was appointed Local Prior. Fray Mercado was recommended to be the Parish Priest (or whatever is the equivalent title) of soon-to-be-declared Sts. Peter and Paul Quasi-Parish. Fray Gallego

was appointed Local Procurator and Chronicler.

In his protocol that gave the green light for the establishment of this new community, Prior General, Very Rev. Fray Miguel Miró, OAR, told the Prior Provincial, referring to the three missionaries: “All of them deserve our trust and recognition for their audacity and availability.”

Frays Lapidez and Mercado are seasoned missionaries. Still in their early 40s, they had already spent more than six years in Sierra Leone, West Africa when they made themselves available to work in this Southeast Asian mission. In a few months’ time since their arrival, they were able to gradually adapt to the new environment, including its distinctly Malay language. But the journey was – and is – not that easy. As Fray Mercado tried to describe it: “Many would think and say that Bahasa Indonesia is easy to learn because of its similarities with the Filipino and Visayan languages. But the truth is, the similarities are nothing compared to the dissimilarities of vocabularies, sentence structure, and idiomatic expressions. It is difficult and energy-consuming.”

But having personally assessed their communication skills in Bahasa Indonesia to be satisfactory, the archbishop handed each of the two his initial yet temporary appointment: Fray Mercado was to extend help in the Katedral Santo Yosep (St. Joseph Cathedral) while Fray Lapidez, in the Paroki Maria Ratu Pencinta Damai (Mary Queen of Peace Parish).

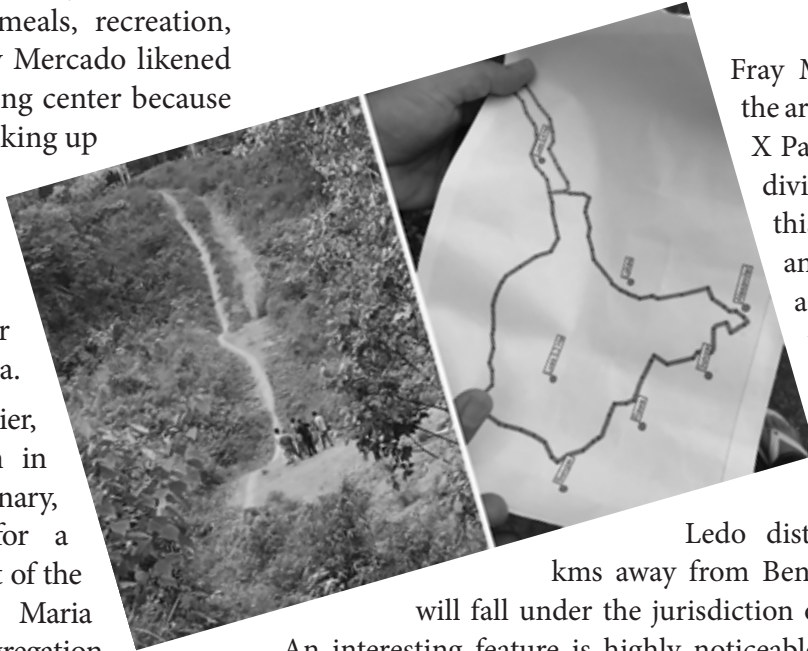
While this was the arrangement for six months, until June of 2019, the conscientious bishop saw to it that the two Augustinian Recollect friars would be able to keep their religious observances

as well. The Theologate House of the archdiocese became their “home base,” where they would meet after their parish works, sit together and make sense of their lived experiences in their respective parish ministry. Here, too, they would join in the basic daily schedule of the seminarians such as the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, recitation of the holy rosary, celebration of the holy mass, meals, recreation, study, and rest. Fray Mercado likened this place to a training center because it was here that, plucking up enough courage, they had started to preside the holy mass in Bahasa, and to deliver their homily also in Bahasa.

Much earlier, before their sojourn in this Theologate Seminary, they first stayed for a month at the convent of the “Kongregasi Bruder Maria Tak Bernoda” (“Congregation of the Brothers of Mary Immaculate Conception”) adjacent to the cathedral to first learn the local language. This was actually the cradle of their transition to Indonesian culture.

On the last week of June 2019, the two Recollect friars left for Bengkayang, one of the 17 districts of the eponymous regency, around 170 kms from the city of Pontianak. The convent of Paroki Santo Pius X (St. Pius X Parish) here would be their home for the coming months. (Coincidentally, St. Pius X, pope from 1903 to 1914, is historically linked with the Augustinian Recollects for having elevated their Congregation into a Religious Order in 1912. Pius X was canonized in 1954.)

Meantime, this convent where the diocesan priests assigned in this parish also stay, serves as the friars’ halfway house to their pastoral activities at Sts. Peter and Paul Chapel (which will later become a quasi-parish) and its different “stasis” (or “outstation chapels”). The two Recollects have already visited almost all these stasis and celebrated mass with the parishioners. “The people received the missionaries with open arms and expressed their excitement to work alongside them,” Fray Mercado observed.



According to Fray Mercado quoting the archbishop, St. Pius X Parish will soon be divided into two: this matrix parish and the one to be administered by the Recollects. The present Sts. Peter and Paul Chapel which is located in

Ledo district, around 30

kms away from Bengkayang district,

will fall under the jurisdiction of the Recollects.

An interesting feature is highly noticeable here: a road is separating the present chapel from the newly-built convent. When Fray Gallego arrives in March 2020, the three-member community will transfer in this convent for a temporary stay until the bigger one and the new parish church some three minutes away from Sts. Peter and Paul will have been constructed and ready for occupancy. When asked about the name of this bigger convent and new parish, Fray Mercado replied: “It’s still up in the air.”

In his latest report to the Prior Provincial, Fray Lapidez echoed the plan of the archbishop to start the construction of the parish convent within this year, and “that a quasi-parish will be established first, without specifying the exact date.”

He also said that their ability to speak Bahasa Indonesia has greatly improved. “We can communicate better now and have adjusted well to the culture of the people.



Recoletos de Saipan celebrates Feast of St. Nicholas

Margaret de la Cruz

SAIPAN--For most of us here in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, St. Nicholas of Tolentine is probably not that well known to us. But we were given the chance to know him in the celebration of his septenary and fiesta held here at Kristo Rai.

St. Nicholas of Tolentine is the patron saint for the poor souls in purgatory. He was a simple priest with great compassion and charity towards his Augustinian brothers as well as towards the people that he came in contact with. He is also known for his bread that is believed to cure the sick.

On Thursday, September 10th, the Feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, the Northern Cluster parishes of San Roque, Santa Remedios and Kristo Rai gathered as one community to celebrate the feast day in his honor with concelebrated mass by priests from the Order of Augustinian Recollects de Saipan (OAR) and assisted by our two assigned Deacons for the Northern Cluster. Fray Albert A. Pellazar, OAR, the local Prior was the main celebrant with Fray Leo Neil Bullos, OAR, from

San Roque and Fray Jayferson Baldeovar, OAR, from Santa Remedios joining him.

Part of the celebration was the actual blessing of the "Healing Bread" and later distributed at the end of Mass to all the faithful in attendance. Together with the healing bread was also the Intercessory Prayer to St Nicholas of Tolentino.

It is said that in life, there is always a first for everything. And yes, indeed, Kristo Rai Parish had the great opportunity to experience for the first time the great story and love of St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

St. Nicholas of Tolentine pray for us and the poor souls in Purgatory.

Three young Recollects embark on new mission

QUEZON CITY – Pursuant to its Life and Mission Project (LAMP) on mission apostolate, the St. Ezekiel Moreno Province recently sent three young priests to two foreign mission stations of the Order: Brazil and Sierra Leone.

Fray Roderick Deguit, the former parish priest of the Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned in Valencia, Negros Oriental, accepted the challenge to live and work abroad for the first time. On February 8, he took three flights that brought him to Manaus, the capital of the Amazon State, in Brazil. He would be staying at the Recollect community of Paróquia Sta. Rita de Cássia (in the district of Cachoeirinha) to learn Portuguese for three months (until April). He will then take a two-month exposure in Tapauá (around five days away by boat from the capital), before proceeding to Brasília for a four-month mission course at Centro de Formação Intercultural (CENFI).

Two days after his departure, on February 10, two newly-ordained priests, Fray Andrie Pugate and Fray Tomokatsu Yamaguchi, also left but, this time, for Sierra Leone, West Africa. Classmates since their philosophy years, the pair were actually “returnees” to Sierra Leone as they had been there the previous year on an eight-month diaconal practice.

True to its commitment to “promote collaboration of the other Provinces” (LAMP 28), the St. Ezekiel Province agreed to work with the St. Nicholas Province by acceding to the latter’s request for a volunteer. As Fray Sergio Sánchez, Prior Provincial of San Nicholas Province, wrote in response to the good news: “It’s a sign of communion, of brotherhood and interprovincial collaboration. The peripheries have always been the point of encounter and opportunity for mutual assistance.”

Meanwhile, the reinforcement to the Recollect presence in Africa formed part of the entire program to “strengthen the Sierra Leone Mission” (LAMP 30). Fray Pugate is assigned at the Recollect community of Our Lady of Sierra Leone Parish in Kamabai while Fray Yamaguchi, at the Recollect community of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Kamalo. Both communities are within the Diocese of Makeni.



Fray Deguit is the 10th Filipino Recollect assigned in the Amazons.

Mission

Just as Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle who, upon his appointment as Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, considered himself an OFW (an Overseas Filipino Worker), these three Recollect missionaries are also OFWs in the service of a bigger family of God's people.

The 43-year old Fray Deguit, the tenth Filipino Recollect to work in Brazil,

is owning the words of Pope Francis from his latest apostolic exhortation: "I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced. I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways" (*Querida Amazonia*, 7).

Frays Pugate and Yamaguchi, ordained priests December 7, 2019, promised to do their best, together with their brothers in their respective community, to take to heart the words of Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*: "Christ challenges his disciples in Africa and gives them the mandate which he gave to the Apostles on the day of his Ascension: 'You shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8) in Africa" (EA 86).



Augustinian Recollects in Sierra Leone open doors to help combat COVID 19

The Augustinian Recollects of Sierra Leone have made their BawBaw facilities on Peninsular Road, Freetown as a quarantine center for Filipinos suspected of contracting the corona virus while in the country. The official request was made last April 6 by the Philippine Honorary Consul in Sierra Leone, Felipe Neri Velasco, to the head of the Augustinian Recollect Mission, Fr. José Prudencio Castillo, OAR.

As of April 28, the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health had recognized the Freetown facilities as quarantine center against COVID-19. The 2,000 strong Filipino community through the advice of the Red Cross worked to install the facilities in the center.

The Augustinian Recollect missions of Kamabai and Kamalo also distributed food good for 15 days to members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity of Sierra Leone and to the volunteers of both missions. The food aid estimated to cost 18,000 euros will be given to 1,220 members of families of the teaching and non-teaching staff and students from St. Paul in Kamalo and St. Thomas in Kamabai schools. ARCORES International contributed a quarter of the fund.

The food assistance program is for the duly registered citizens of Sierra Leone. This is one of the priorities of the educational centers of the Catholic Church: to ensure that all the children in their schools are duly registered and have all the rights as citizens of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone had reported 104 cases as of April. The country has only 13 respirators available. It lacks clean water and food like rice. People cannot look for jobs because of movement restrictions due to the pandemic.

Many people in Kamalo and Kamabai are already in dire need. The OAR school in Kamalo had to request authorization to allow nearby residents to fetch water from a well inside the school. Thanks to this well, hundreds of families have drinking water.

If you want to donate to the missionaries in Sierra Leone in their fight against COVID-19, please visit www.arcores.org.



Chota and Augustinian Recollects: 75 years of history

This article was translated from the original Spanish post on the official website of the Order of Augustinian Recollects. (www.agustinosrecoletos.com)

The Order of Augustinian Recollects recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of their arrival in Chota, Peru through a series of lectures, a cultural gala night, pilgrimage to a cemetery and thanksgiving mass.

The commemoration touched on the impact of the Order's arrival in Chota. The Recollects which had taken root in Cutervo, a neighboring province, decided to expand their pastoral work in Chota in 1945. Chota was an interesting town with 4,000 inhabitants. It was a city with a Spanish foundation, with a classic plaza, church and a water channel.

On January 7, the Augustinian Recollect Bishop of Chachapoyas, Bp. Emiliano Cisneros, OAR, DD, who was a missionary and bishop in Chota, presented the paper "The Arrival of the Augustinian Recollects in Chota: The historical fact." Fray Angel Herrán, OAR, and Fray José Estebas, OAR, discussed about "The changes that the Augustinian Recollects have produced in Chota: The current fact."

The following day, a pilgrimage was held to the San Juan cemetery where remains of several religious and bishops who served this mission territory rest.

A cultural gala night was hosted by the dance school of the Recollect Augustinian Youth (RAY) of Chota, Kuntur phaway. An exhibit of Andanzas gattas: 75 años en Chota was opened in the museum of the Santa Monica parish.

On the third day, the Provincial Vicar of Peru, Fray Víctor Villegas, OAR, held a press conference aired by Santa Monica Radio, about this important event for Chota and for the Order of Augustinian Recollects. In the afternoon, a Thanksgiving Mass was presided by the Bp. Fortunato Pablo Urcey, OAR, DD, Bishop of Chota. An agape followed at the esplanade of the Santa Monica parish.

Santa Remedios fiesta in the midst of pandemic



SAIPAN—They sat six feet apart, wore masks but they did not let the pandemic dampen their enthusiasm in celebrating the parish fiesta here in Nuestra Señora Bithen Delos Remedios. Parishioners filled every available seat, including those placed outside the church and under tarp canopies. Together, the assembly prayed in thanksgiving for yet another year of blessings in the humble northern village of Tanapag.

The Marianas is currently at the peak of its typhoon season, but with God's grace and Mary's intercession, the sun was out all throughout the morning's fiesta. Sunshine caressed the statue of Nuestra Señora, bedecked with white orchids below her crown of stars.

Thirty minutes before the scheduled mass time, the techa led the people in praying the final day's novena to Sta. Remedios. Most Reverend Bishop Ryan P. Jiminez, celebrated the mass with Fray Jayferson Baldeovar, OAR. The bishop talked about



the recent beatification of Blessed Carlo Acutis and asked the parishioners to emulate the saint to be humble, to give to the poor, and to be of service to others.

Parish Council Vice President, Kennedy Benjamin, gave a brief message of appreciation to all those who contributed to this year's fiesta.

The statue of Nuestra Señora, enclosed in glass led the motorcade that made its way through the entire northern half of the island passing by two parishes. Fray Neil Bullos, OAR, and a handful of San Roque parishioners waited for the procession to pass by.

The fiesta lunch was held at Tanapag Beach with parishioners sharing packed lunches of red rice, roasted chicken, beef pot roast smothered in gravy, and fruity macaroni salad.

The following exhortation was posted on the Nuestra Señora Bithen delos Remedios Facebook page. "In the time of our current pandemic, we have our Blessed Mother, Virgin of Good Remedy, who intercedes and prays for us, regardless of the situations we find ourselves in, allowing remedy in our spirits and hearts despite interior or exterior hardships. Let's all follow her example of leading a peaceful life and accepting God's will.

BIBA SANTA REMEDIOS!

SPIRITUALITY ...

Foundations laid for CEAR-Filipinas

QUEZON CITY – The eighth Center will soon rise in the Philippines! This will be a new addition to the network of Centers for Augustinian Recollect Spirituality (or RedCEAR as its Spanish acronym, where CEAR stands for Centro de Espiritualidad Agustino Recoleta). The first seven are scattered in the Spanish-speaking part of the Order: CEAR-Costa Rica, CEAR-Ciudad de México, CEAR-Zona Norte (Mexico), CEAR-Madrid (Spain), CEAR-Andalucía (Spain), CEAR-Querétaro (Mexico), and CEAR-Venezuela.



The creation of this center is a response to the 55th General Chapter's mandate to every Province to establish at least one Center for Augustinian Recollect Spirituality (CARS). It is envisioned as a new ministry that expressly seeks to impart the Augustinian Recollect spirituality among the faithful in its various apostolates. The centers are to offer spiritual formation and personal accompaniment to both the religious and the lay people using the Augustinian Recollect spirituality.

The preparation for the creation of CEAR-Filipinas (or CARS-Philippines) started with a five-day capacity-building workshop. And since accompaniment is one of CEAR's areas of evangelization, the workshop included a three-day module on the subject. Fr. Renato de Guzman, a diocesan clergy of the Diocese of Ilagan, Isabela and a practicing clinical psychologist, was the resource speaker from February 3-5, 2020.

Fr. De Guzman shared his expertise to 17 OAR priests, five Augustinian Recollect Sisters, and 22 lay people from Luzon and Visayas communities. The ministry of accompaniment Fr. De Guzman said requires the minister himself should be his first client. Each one has to know himself or herself—a reminder reminiscent of the Augustinian prayer, "Let me know myself, let me know You."



Fr. De Guzman said would be ministers of accompaniment must have the following leadership characteristics and habits : observing moments of solitude, silence, prayer, study, and adequate rest. Ministers need also to cultivate relationships with accountability and healthy boundaries.

He also cited the need for flexibility since there would be clients that are difficult to handle. He also underlined the importance of having a collaboration with other ministers or even with psychologists should the need arise.

Fr. De Guzman said when a client approaches a person for accompaniment, he desires conversion. He then reminded client and minister that “Conversion happens when a person is brought back to a deep and genuine relationship with God.”

On Thursday, February 6, Mr. Mark Calano, PhD, an assistant professor of Philosophy and Theology in Ateneo de Manila University came in as the resource speaker. His topic revolved on “Designing Retreat and Recollections: An Initial Approach.” Although Ignatian in background, Mr. Calano, an avid reader of St. Augustine himself, tried his best to steer the discussion into Augustinian leanings. And true to this, the retreat design he was focusing on was similar in form to the *Lectio Divina*.



One of the theses against which his talk rested was this: despite the huge gap in terms of years, the life of St. Augustine is still relevant to contemporary man. Having said this, he suggested that in designing a retreat or recollection, the facilitator should look at specific episodes in the life of St. Augustine and find biblical passages that can be associated with them, then the facilitator should lead the retreatants to reflection using the same.

On Friday, February 7, Fray Lauro Larlar, OAR, gave the synthesis to the week-long seminar. He pointed out that as members of the newly-crafted CARSP, the members should be able to live and impart the rich Augustinian Recollect spirituality. One of the focuses of the CARSP is accompaniment but he exhorted them that the members of the center and the religious themselves should be able to benefit from this Augustinian Recollect style of accompaniment. Only and only if the members themselves are immersed and are able to live this spirituality can they be effective in sharing the same spirituality to other people who might approach the center for help. Fray Larlar said: “Live the Recollect spirituality”.

All in all, 44 participants braced and offered themselves for this new challenge. They have committed themselves to support the Center of Augustinian Recollect Spirituality in the Philippines with hopes that it can lead many people back to God with the aid of the spirituality of the Augustinian Recollection which has contributed to the Church a good number of holy men and women throughout its four centuries of existence.

The workshop seminar on accompaniment was attended by 17 OAR priests, 5 AR nuns and 22 lay from the different Luzon and Visayan communities.

La Salud Feast 2020: A celebration a Queen deserves

QUEZON CITY—It was the height of the pandemic but devotees to Nuestra Señora de la Salud came to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It was a sight to behold that on her feast day, November 17, 2020, they came to the church of San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish in Quezon City. Observing all health protocols, they celebrated in a simple yet solemn way the Fiesta our Lady deserves. The celebration of the Mass commenced at 6:00 in the evening with the Prior Provincial, Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, as the main celebrant with the religious priests of the Provincial Curia as concelebrants and Fray Rommel Rubia, OAR, as the homilist.

Veneration. The Prior Provincial incenses the venerated image of Nuestra Señora de la Salud at the beginning of the Solemn Mass.

Prior to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, devotional activities were held. At 4:30 in the afternoon a meditative rosary was recited. It was led by the members of the Recollect Augustinian

Youth Provincialate Chapter. At 5:30, the traditional giving of ex-votos during the fiesta of the La Salud was witnessed by the faithful.

Veil vesting and offering of ex-votos. Last year's ex-votos are removed from the image of La Salud to give way to her new veil and precious stones as thanksgiving gifts.



The tradition of giving the Lady some items of precious stones and metals and other special items is closely linked to the devotion to the Lady as recorded in historical documents. Record shows that the altar chapels of Nuestra Señora de la Salud in Bagumbayan and later on in San Nicolas Church in Intramuros (both churches are not anymore existing) were filled with ex votos. This tradition is an external manifestation from the devotees in thanking God for the grace of health received, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Since the revival of this devotion in 2016, many devotees offered gifts to the Blessed Virgin, now displayed in her shrine, as an act of gratitude. This year's donor for the jewelry worn by the

Blessed Mother is from a family who was spared from COVID 19 when one of its members, a medical front-liner, got infected by the virus and was with the family for a couple of days before being transferred to a health facility. The ex voto is a gold and silver pendant encrusted with pave rose cut diamonds with a total weight of 4.15 carats with a 3.80 carat emerald at the center. The pendant hangs on a stringed tiny, delicate sea-water pearls. The second ex voto, an embroidered barong veil for the use of the La Salud, is from the Mr. and Mrs. Paciano Bunyi and family from Batangas who themselves are devotees of the La Salud.

Fray Selma, during the introductory rite of the Holy Mass, said that “man, nowadays, are more concerned with their health. It is for this reason that most of them are enrolled in different fitness and wellness programs. However, the concern of the Beloved Mother is not only the physical but the totality of the person- physical, emotional, psychological, moral and spiritual.” Because of this, he invited the faithful, just as Mary said to the servers in the wedding at Cana, to “do whatever Jesus tells you.”

“Do whatever he tells you.” Fray Rommel Rubia, OAR, Spiritual Director of Cofradia de Transitó de Nuestra Señora, the confraternity of the devotees of La Salud, delivers the homily.

Fray Rubia in his emotion-filled homily, said that this year’s fiesta of Nuestra Señora de la Salud is a very significant one because of the pandemic. According to him, because of the effects of the pandemic, all of us are wounded physically, emotionally, spiritually. Thus, all of us, without exemption, need healing. Citing the Gospel narrative on the wedding at Cana, Fray Rubia, OAR, exhorted the faithful to approach the Mother of Jesus, like what the servants did, and tell her “we have no more wine. We are already tired. Heal us.” He, however insisted



that it is not the Blessed Virgin who heals us but his Son Jesus. Mary, on her part, gives the right and most effective medicine. This is her role. And so, he challenged everyone to go to Jesus for He alone can heal all our infirmities.

“Patotoo.” Fray Emmanuel Bolilia, OAR, read five testimonials of miraculous healings and answered prayers from La Salud devotees.

After the celebration of the Holy Mass, Fray Emmanuel Bolilia, OAR, Head of the Province’s Section for Spirituality, read to the public the testimonies of healing of some devotees who contracted different illnesses but received healing because of their devotion to the Lady of La Salud. After this, some of the faithful offered ex votos to Nuestra Señora de la Salud. Some offered pendants, earrings, and rings of gold and silver with precious stones. One offered his achievements by offering his gold medal while others offered rosaries made of pearls and precious metals. All these will be displayed in Her shrine adjacent to the church.

Recoletos de Negros Oriental conducts ARSE 2020

Fray Jessriel Marcha, OAR

NEGROS ORIENTAL—Members of the Augustinian Recollect communities in Negros Oriental—Recoletos de Valencia, Recoletos de Caidiocan, and Recoletos de Tambo—conducted their annual retreat in the first week of December 2020. The retreat, known as the Augustinian Recollect Spiritual Exercises or ARSE, lasted for three days.



As agreed by the communities' three priors (Fray Enrico Peter Silab, OAR, of Valencia, Fray Jay Parilla, OAR, of Caidiocan, and Fray Cirilo Andan, OAR, of Tambo), the retreat was hosted in turn by the communities. Recoletos de Valencia was the first to host, followed by Recoletos de Caidiocan and then Recoletos de Tambo on the fourth of December.

ARSE is usually done in batches at the Talavera House of Prayer-Recoletos in Cebu City but the risks of mass gathering and changing health protocols from region to another, encouraged the Provincial Council to rule that ARSE 2020 will be by community.



Opening Recollection emphasized on vocation

Bro. Jesse Meer Alipes

BAGUIO CITY– Do not be afraid. Rev. Fr. Alan Jacinto, OAR, told the seminarians to embrace the problems and not run from it during the annual opening recollection he gave to the Seminarians of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary last September 6, 2020.

Fray Jacinto, who is the National Vocation Director of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, focused on the three Sacred Spaces of Vocation present in the formands' and religious' life: Decision, Desolation, and Direction. "Even before you said yes to God, you are already being formed," said Fr. Jacinto in the first part of the recollection. After responding to the call the formand finds himself in the sacred space of Decision, Fr. Jacinto said.

Talking about the second sacred space of Desolation, he encouraged the seminarians to have a "compelling conviction" that he is chosen by God in order to stand for what is right amidst trials and difficulties.



After the first part of the recollection, the seminarians shared their insights, reflections, and realizations among themselves concerning the talk given,

Group Sharing. Bro. Reymar Macadagdag (holding blue notebook) shared among the Third and



Fourth Year Formands about his experience on the Sacred Space of Desolation. "Jesus said to take up your cross and follow me," he said to correspond to his admonition to the seminarians about the rigorous formation process. "Like gold tested in fire, you must be also tested."

On the second part of the recollection, Fr. Alan gave emphasis on the sacred space of Direction and the importance of grace in handling problems. "If you have a problem, don't run from it. You must embrace your problems and it will go away," said the recollection master adding that God's grace is sufficient.

The recollection ended with the Solemn Vespers and Benediction celebrated by the Fr. Jacinto himself. The recollection is part of the preparation for the opening of the formation year 2020-2021 that officially started last August 24, 2020.

ARCORES ...



"We all have the mission to be in solidarity and to spread hope"

The Superiors General of the Augustinian Recollect family called for 'creativity in charity' to help offset the impact the COVID-19 pandemic on evangelizing mission.

The Superiors General sent a joint message recalling the religious and people who have died from the pandemic calling for hope after creative initiatives emerged to help bring the faith closer to everyone.

The letter was signed by the Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects; the federal mothers of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters of Spain and Mexico; the federal mother of the Discalced Augustinian Sisters; and the general superiors of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters, Augustinian Recollect Missionaries, Augustinian Recollect Sisters of the Heart of Jesus, Augustinian Recollect Sisters of the Sick and Comendadoras of Santiago.

All of them began their writing inviting not to be afraid and to ask for the gift of the Spirit "to listen to the voice of Christ in the cry of those who suffer from the pandemic, as well as in all those who are victims of human injustice or any kind of abuse". We want to hear," they say, "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

"We have suffered and we suffer."

At the moment when the crisis begins to subside, the superiors of the Augustinian Recollect family assure that "it has been a time of suffering". "We have suffered and we suffer with those who suffer in our religious communities, in our families, parishes and educational centers and in the whole world", they indicate. Concretely they remember the "dear brothers" who have died for the COVID-19, as well as those who suffer in hospitals or in their communities.

In this regard, they recall the words of Pope Francis in the extraordinary blessing *Urbi et Orbi* on March 27: "In the midst of the isolation in which we are suffering the lack of affection and encounter, experiencing the lack of so many things, we hear once again the announcement that saves us: Jesus is risen and lives at our side. From his Cross, the Lord commits us to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look at those who call upon us, to strengthen, recognize and encourage the grace that dwells in us. Let us not extinguish the flickering flame (cf. Is 42:3), which never gets sick, and let us make hope come alive again".

The superiors also cited, despite the pandemic's negative consequences, the evangelizing and educational work done by religious, lay people and young people during this trying time. They especially value the prayer of the contemplative sisters from their monasteries. In general, they note that "prayer has been intensified" in a virtual and telematic way in many places, a modality that they value as "new and especially precious".

"The health crisis will have a social impact."

Likewise, the Prior General and the superiors of the women's congregations ask for unity: "We all have the mission to be in solidarity and to spread hope. In this sense, they warned that "we cannot confine ourselves and worry about what is 'mine' and 'ours' but for the common good."

The religious have warned that "the health crisis will have a social impact, on work, on the economy, on human relations and also on our evangelizing mission." Even though this situation will provoke "greater austerity", these phenomena are "a call to the imagination of charity, to be creative in order to be more human," they say.

To this end, the superiors of the Augustinian Recollect family invite collaboration with ARCORES in the different initiatives it is carrying out in various countries to alleviate the consequences of the coronavirus. The help can be through economic resources, through volunteering or by giving material means or space.

"We have to prepare ourselves and be ready with prayer, charity and solidarity to walk together in each country," they say. Finally, they have asked to be open to the Spirit in order to "see the world in the light of Christ, while hope grows in the depths of our hearts.

ARCORES-Filipinas commits to safeguard the environment

Englevert Reyes, Joanna de Catalina, and Jessica Magallon-Avenido

CEBU CITY—After the official constitution of ARCORES as an international solidarity network among the Augustinian Recollects in 22 countries in 2019, ARCORES Filipinas launched the Recoletos Heart Solidarity Campaign on February 5-6, 2020, intensifying its relevance and presence in the Philippines. The campaign's theme "Change Your Life, Not the Planet" revived the call for preserving the integrity and care of creation, a "concrete response" of the Order of the Augustinian Recollect (OAR) to the call of Pope Francis to take better care of the planet and the lives in it.

Three resource speakers were invited at the University of San Jose-Recoletos (USJ-R) to discuss Philippine social realities and the responses of the Catholic Church.

Socio-ecological realities

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) in May 2019 called for minimizing plastic pollution as a means of halting the worsening state of Philippine marine ecosystems. The Philippines, known as the center of world's marine biodiversity, had notoriously become one of the significant sources of plastic trash in the world. It contributes three million metric tons of plastic wastes and 500,000 metric tons of plastic leakage per year (Ocean Conservancy Report, 2015). A study has predicted that by 2050, the weight of plastics floating in oceans could be more than the weight of fish. The extensive use of plastic has risen 20 fold in the past 50 years, and it is expected to double again in the next 20 years. This is on top of the serious ongoing problems of air and water pollution, illegal mining and logging, deforestation, dynamite fishing, landslides, coastal erosion, wildlife extinction, loss of biodiversity, and water scarcity.

Green Living

Environmentalist Vermon Timbas of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said green living could address these ecological concerns. He said green living is a lifestyle that attempts to balance the conservation and preservation of the earth's natural resources, habitats, and biodiversity with personal and community needs. Timbas explained green living is making sustainable choices on what we eat, how we travel, what we buy, and how we use and dispose of it. Green living is also about embracing "environmentalism," as a way of thinking in which people care more about the planet and the long-term survival of life on earth. Timbas stressed the need to be aware of one's carbon footprint and apply practical ways to reduce it, to mitigate the imminent consequences of climate change. Here's how to do it, he said, introducing the mnemonics "8R's" which

stands for "(1) refuse what you don't need, (2) reduce what we want, (3) reuse by using reusables, (4) rot [compost] the rest, (5) recycle what you cannot refuse, reduce or reuse, (6) report environmental crimes, (7) rethink for greener option or activity, and (8) relay what you know, what you've learned."

The first session ended with different groups of participants presenting their mini-project proposals that promote and apply green living.



Living the Catholic Social Teachings

Fr. Rene Cabag, CICM, discussed Catholic Social Teachings (CST) or doctrines on human dignity and common good in official writings issued by popes, bishops, and other prominent faith leaders and how it must guide Catholics in living and caring for the environment.

Fr. Cabag presented the seven themes or principles of Catholic Social Teachings: (1) life and dignity of the human person, (2) call to family, community, and participation, (3) rights and responsibilities, (4) option for the poor and the vulnerable, (5) the dignity of work and the rights of workers, (6) solidarity, and (7) care for God's creation. He shared real-life stories and anecdotes about the way we treat the hungry, homeless and oppressed, the role of the state and the church, the

impact of social organizations, the call to care for the environment. He emphasized that our individual and collective mission must be deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teachings (CST). That contemplation must be coupled with action, that we use science and reason while we propagate our Catholic faith. The principles and themes of Catholic Social Teachings are products of practical reflection on the realities of modern life, he said. Fr. Cabag presented several questions for participants to ponder on: “Do our efforts change anything? How have we transformed lives? Are we really making this world better?”

It is then imperative for Catholics to know about CST, recognize the problems of the community, and act on the problems based on the principles of CST, he said. He concluded with the message that achieving something becomes easier when there is solidarity among people. Still, solidarity will only succeed if the goal is indeed the collective dream of the people.

Living out the ‘Laudato Si’

“Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” - Pope Francis, ‘Laudato Si’, 13

Pope Francis’ second encyclical, “Laudato Si,” or “Praise Be to You” is an urgent call to tackle the current ecological crisis by changing the way people think to allow all men to live sustainably in dignity. The pope called on all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action” and puts forth the question, “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?” Renowned environmentalist and leader of the Living Laudato Si’ Philippines movement Rodney Galicha said economy should have been the wise management or stewardship of our natural resources. But in recent times, he said, part of economics appears to involve the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. Galicha presented stark images of how men have hurt and destroyed earth so rapidly making many vulnerable specially to climate change. Galicha called on everyone to change one’s lifestyle, to live in harmony, love generously, to take simple and

responsible eco-actions everyday as means to care for the earth and to live simply so that we don’t take more than our fair share.



Greening our Schools and Parish Communities

One of the highlights of the Heart Solidarity Campaign was the presentation of the two manuals: Greening Our Parish Communities and Ecological Sustainability Guide for Educational Centers, which were authored by the Augustinian Recollect brothers and priests.

The manuals were turned over to partner institutions, organizations, and communities under ARCORES Solidarity Network - Filipinas, with the hope that they will serve as the blueprint in the implementation of the campaign.

Synchronizing the Implementation of the Heart Solidarity Campaign

Bro. Raymund Alcedo, OAR, said the of the Heart Solidarity Campaign is to rediscover the profound ecological dimension of our Christian life. As proposed, this campaign will have three parts: (1) UNITE-unite in prayer, (2) CAMPAIGN - read the campaign materials and apply the eco-actions to one’s community, and (3)SHARE - participate financially in the humanitarian projects, initiated by ARCORES. Bro. Alcedo also articulated the 4C’s that represents the four major eco-values being anchored

by this campaign: (1) CARE - care for creation, (2) CONNECTEDNESS - connecting to God, others, and our home, (3) CONCRETENESS - Augustinian Recollect family's concrete responses to UN Sustainable Development Goals, and (4) COMMITMENT - commitment to listen, discern and act for an integral solidarity as ARCORES.



Grounding the Challenge

The second day of the Recoletos Heart Solidarity Campaign started with the Revisit of the Manual of Operation of ARCORES- FILIPINAS with the help of Dr. Joanna de Catalina, USJR INFECOP Supervisor. The manual is a product of two (2) gatherings initiated by the Commission on Social and Ecological Concerns-Recoletos (CSEC-R): 1) First Heart Solidarity Conference held on November 6-7, 2015 at Talavera House of Prayer, Quiot, Basak, Pardo, Cebu City; and the 2) First Organizational Meeting and Planning of the CSEC-R held on July 25-26, 2018 at St. Ezekiel Moreno Provincialate in Quezon City. The manual, especially the vision-mission part, was revisited for the purpose of assessing its relevance to the current trends and problems besetting the Philippines in particular and the world in general and to update ARCORES direction.

Deepening the ARCORES Project

Rev. Fr. Vicente Cadelina, OAR, reported on the different projects funded by ARCORES International, ARCORES-Filipinas through CSEC-R, and the local Recoletos communities..”

Integrating the ARCORES Volunteer Program

The ARCORES Volunteer Program has the following objectives: 1) to become aware of the reality of the world of poverty, to encourage the volunteer to take actions that can lead to a change of life; 2) to become agents of awareness of their family, work and friends, thus exercising a multiplier effect of social transformation; and 3) to make an effective and continuous commitment to the actions (local and/or international) carried out by ARCORES or by another entity with similar social aims.

Fray Rouel Sia, OAR, reported on the ARCORES Volunteer Program. Five lay volunteers, accompanied by one Recollect priest, came to the Philippines from Spain. It was a cultural exchange that initiated the participants to different activities like lessons in conversational Filipino and the native Casian language, how to assemble solar lamps, tree planting, and emergency response training.

The second day of the Heart Solidarity Campaign activity was closed by Fray Anthony Morillo, OAR.



Cavite Recollect school shelters Taal evacuees

CAVITE CITY—San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite (SSC-RdC) and Sacred Heart School of Cavite-Recoletos de Alfonso (SHSC-RdA) joined efforts to help ease the plight of evacuees from Laurel, Batangas after Taal Volcano erupted.

Priests and staff of the two Recollect communities were on hand to assess the needs of twenty families made up of 99 individuals,



ages one to 92, who sought shelter at the Alfonso School.

SSC-R de Cavite also assisted in CDRRMO-Cavite City and MDRRMO Rosario relief activities.

San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite and Sacred Heart School of Cavite-Recoletos de Alfonso sought donations for the victims.

Fray Tagoy briefs SeMoNoRe novices

ANTIPOLO CITY—Fray Jaazeal (Tagoy) Jakosalem, OAR, the representative of the Province to Madrid-based Arcores Internacional briefed novices about social and ecological concerns last April 21,2020. Fray Tagoy's briefing brought respite to the lockdown being experienced by the seven novices and novice master Fray Roland Cepe, OAR.

Fray Tagoy began his talk at St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate – Recoletos explaining why ARCORES was established. He said its establishment was inspired by the spirit of loving service for the poor and marginalized, caring for God's creation. It also seeks to deepen the Recollects' social action programs.

Fray Tagoy said that from 2017 when it was established it is now an international



network unifying the Order's social outreach globally. In the Philippines, ARCORES functions under the Commission of Social & Ecological Concerns—Recoletos.

In his talk, Fray Tagoy stressed that “simplicity, interiority, and humility should always be the core principles that should guide one's service for the lost, least, and the last.”

He talked of his experience in crafting poverty alleviation and ways to expand education to the poor and means how to help conserve the environment. “In education for instance” he said, “less we have already 800 scholars whose educational expenses are being shouldered by us”.

He said ARCORES expanded also its assistance by tying up with some local government organizations in their advocacies like: no poverty, zero hunger, good health & well-being, quality education, affordable & renewable energy, and climate. “To live out this apostolate”, he said, “the spiritual dimension of conversion should be seen through a transformed lifestyle witnessing to service to the poor and taking care of the environment.

Valencia rescue volunteers in action

VALENCIA —The Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned not only provides spiritual sustenance to the people of Valencia but also assistance in times of trouble through its orange-clad rescue volunteers.

The Parish Emergency Rescue Unit Volunteers, Inc. (PERUV) was founded by parish priest Rouel Sia, OAR, on November 11, 2001. Its main objective is to respond to any emergency occurring in the locality. PERUV is a non-profit, non-political, and non-government organization and its membership is open to all who are practicing the Roman Catholic faith. It is under the supervision of the parish priest, but works in close coordination with the Diocesan Social Action Center of the Diocese of Dumaguete and the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officers of the Local Government Unit of Valencia, Negros Oriental. To facilitate their response to any emergency, they are trained in radio communication and tied up with RECON CART 7, Inc. under the Radio Communication Operation Network Philippines, Inc. or RECON Phils.



The organization is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The organization is now the supervision of Fray Jay Parilla, OAR, local prior of Recoletos de Caidiocan. Over the years,

the said organization spearheaded and participated building homes, rescuing typhoon victims and clearing operations.

Balay sa Gugma

Two years ago, the parish under the administration of Fray Roderick Deguit, OAR, started the project Balay sa Gugma (House of Love). The project provides decent houses to the homeless. The BEC helps identify the really needy for assessment of the parish priest and the volunteers. If the intended beneficiary meets a set of criteria, then the volunteers together with members of the Couples for Christ repair or build the house for free. The materials used are donated by other parishioners. The first beneficiary of the project was Mr. and Mrs. Emilito Vincoy from Brgy. Bongbong, Valencia, Negros Oriental. Other beneficiaries were Mrs. Verna Peña, Mrs. Rosemarie Grapa (Brgy. Balayagmank), Mrs. Paulina Catalbas (Brgy. Jawa) and Mrs. Dalmacia Tubog (Brgy. Jawa).



Rescue Work

The Valencia rescue volunteers were also trained in first aid intervention to pre-hospital emergency care. They also trained on rappelling and hiking and basic survival so that they may respond to emergencies in whatever terrain. To update their skills, they receive regular training from the members of Adelante Life Emergency Team

(ALERT), the emergency team of the University of San Jose- Recoletos, Cebu City.

Because of their skills, the volunteers are always the first to respond to any emergency case. Last year, the team rescued a woman who hurt her leg while hiking in Mt. Talinis. In gratitude, the saved woman promised to provide materials and other emergency tools to the organization. Road accidents are just some of the common incidents that the members of the PERUV deal with. Radio communications enable the volunteers to respond fast in road accidents which are promptly reported to proper authorities.

Disaster Response

Every time a typhoon hits the island of Negros, the team is always on stand-by with their radios on and loops of ropes, bolo, and chainsaw ready at hand. They also look out for possible landslides and flash floods from overflowing rivers. They also assist in road clearing. Landslides are reported to the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MDRMMC) for proper action.

COVID-19 Response

When the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was imposed in Negros Oriental, members of PERUV were asked by the local government of Valencia to help man check-points to restrict the mobility of the people, thus avoid spreading the virus. Although members of the Philippine National Police stay in their post 24/7, rescue volunteers clock in from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM.

With them are the Barangay Officials and Tanod members taking turns for duty. Part of their responsibility is to communicate to the PNP office any untoward incidents or any instances that require police assistance. Also, they helped to ease the flow of traffic by guiding drivers where to stop for checking of documents. At times they also get the temperature of the motorists and spray alcohol to disinfect their hands. They also laid carpet on the street drenched with disinfectant solution so that the wheels of the vehicles going in and outside the municipality will be washed. Their services were terminated only when the General Community Quarantine was raised in the whole district after months of staying in the streets rain or shine.



Aside from their regular duty in the check-point areas, they also conducted disinfection and sanitation in some public areas of the municipality. Days after the ECQ, the members of PERUV together with the personnel from the Rural Health Unit of Valencia disinfected the public market of Valencia and Valencia Central School and Valencia National High School. The Central school served as a quarantine facility for Locally Stranded Individuals (LSI) for months and had to be thoroughly disinfected for the opening of classes. They also disinfected the school owned and administered by the Augustinian Recollects in Brgy. Caidiocan, the San Pedro Academy-Recoletos.

Parish Work

The rescue volunteers are also active in the parish, cleaning and putting up of banners. Some of them are choir members, altar servers, and lectors. They also act as marshalls during processions and parades. They are great actors to boot, joining the Live Stations of the Cross as part of the Holy Week celebration of the parish. They acted as Roman soldiers, temple guards, Pilate, Mary, some of the apostles, and in crowd control who even wore the costume of a Roman soldier so that their presence would blend in the event.



When public worship was allowed, the rescue volunteers were the frontliners. They are the ones in charge of taking the body temperature of those attending the celebration as well as getting their names for contact tracing. They also assist Mass goers to their designated pews. After the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the pews, kneelers, and all other ground areas that are used by the parishioners are disinfected by the same team. Over-all, they are the ones given the task to ensure that proper health protocols are observed inside the church.

The members regularly gather in a cosy hut built in the back area of the parish grounds. It is their headquarters for bonding, refuge with friends. The rescue volunteers share their gift with the church.

HISTORY, CULTURE AND HERITAGE ...



Our Lady Of Mt. Carmel Parish – Recoletos @ 50

January 1, 2021 is the most awaited time in the History of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish-Recoletos. It will be celebrating its Golden Year anniversary. 50 years of unwavering of dedicated faith, love and service.

Just three years ago , on August 2018 Parish priest Fray Joseph D. Granada, OAR and parochial vicar Fray Nelson S. Plohimon OAR and the parish pastoral council started preparing for the big event.

They decided on a major renovation including painting, repairing and refurnishing of the church pews, changing of the stained glass window, repair of the church's roof, installation of a retablo at the church's altar, renovation of comfort rooms, purchasing of new sets media board(flat screen TVs and camera for the mass) and purchase of new sets of CCTV camera.

The renovation was estimated to cost P10 million and was expected to last for one year.. The parish raised funds through projects like "LIGHT A BELEN" - A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

The COVID 19 pandemic adversely affected the renovation project forcing it to be stopped by March 2020 after Cebu City was put under ef Enhanced Community Quarantine. Renovation resumed six months after on August when the city was put under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) . Complying with all health requirements, engineers, contractors and workers exerted all efforts to finish the renovation.

Archbishop Jose Serofia Palma,D.D. of the Archdiocese of Cebu Solemnly re-dedicated the Church and the Altar last November 16,2020

. Cocelebrants were Bishop Emeritus Antonio Ranola, D.D. and priests from OAR communities, diocesan and other religious congregations.

It was broadcast live on the Parish Facebook Page - Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish – Recoletos Cebu and over radio DYRE. The blessing of the renovated Parish office, Parish Social Hall and Parish Parish Pastoral Council office took place on the same occasion. The parish also purchased new sets of vestments, vessels and stoles for the priests. On November 26, the parish launched the Logo Making contest for the 50th founding anniversary of the parish. Judging of entries was made on December 17,2020 at 2:00pm during the meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council. The announcement and awarding of the

winning entries was made on December 24,2020 during the Christmas Vigil mass at 6:00pm.

The following activities were made December 31,2020 during New Year mass at 6:00pm: unveiling of the official logo for the 50th founding anniversary; opening of the Photo Exhibit – History of the Augustinian Recollect in the Philippines and old photos of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Recoletos; and Reading of the approved request of the Plenary Indulgence of the Parish that was granted by the Archbishop of Cebu stating that the Parish will be a place of Pilgrimage and will celebrate the “Year of Grace” that will commence on January 1,2021 to January 1, 2022. All Pilgrims who will visit the parish will enjoy the Plenary indulgence when in state of grace and pray 1 Aposotles creed, 1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary and 1 Glory be for the intention of the Holy Father Pope Francis.

Other activities for the 50th anniversary celebration:

- July 4,2021 – opening salvo for the 50 yrs. anniversary
 - ◊ Solemn procession of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel , St. Joseph, Our Lady of La Salud, St. Lucy and St. Ezekiel Moreno;
 - ◊ Marian Exhibit of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Images;
 - ◊ Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Vestments Exhibit
- Highlight of the 50 Golden years anniversary
 - ◊ Novena days-July 7-15,2021 – Rosary/Novena @3 Pm;Holy Mass @ 4pm
 - ◊ Vesperas – July 15,2021 - celebration of the 50th yr. founding day with Archbishop Jose S. Palma,D.D. as the main presider of the Eucharistic celebration
 - ◊ Fiesta day – July 16,2021 – celebration of the 50th Patronal Fiesta
 - * Mass schedules : 6:30 am,8:00am, 9:30 am,2:00 pm & 4:00 pm
 - * Pontifical Mass :9:30 am with Bishop Midyphil Billiones,D.D.
 - * Solemn procession at 5:00 pm
- Closing of Plenary Indulgence on January 1,2022 – Thanksgiving mass.

Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine: 400 years of Consecrated Life and Missionary History

The Province of St. Nicholas of Tolentine of the Order of Augustinian Recollects will be 400 years old in November 2021. The 4th Centennial celebration will take place from September 10, 2020 to December 5, 2021.



The Centennial Celebration Commission had its second meeting on the 25th of June 2020. The 8 members are: Fray Rafael Mediavilla Becerril, President; Fray Pablo Panedas Galindo, representative of the General Curia; Fray Leander Barrot, representative of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno; Fray Francisco Javier Acero Pérez, representative of Mexico; Msgr. Angel San Casimiro Fernández, representative of Costa Rica; Fray Fernando Martín Esteban, representative of Spain; Fray Rafael Castillo de Luna, representative of the United States; and Fray Santiago José Martínez Lázaro, representative of Brazil.

On December 12, 2019, the Prior Provincial, Fray Sergio Sánchez, made an official invitation to all the Provinces to prepare and join in this 4th Centennial celebration. In addition to appointing the commission, he set goals based on the words of Pope Francis to the consecrated life:

“Look at the past with gratitude, live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope.”

The committee began to organize activities and create materials for the occasion. The slogan phrase is: “Siempre en misión” (Always in mission). From the beginning of the Province, the friars sent to evangelize have given us this clear identity. The “Siempre en misión” celebration has a special logo that we hope will be visibly present in all our ministries during this year-long celebration. There are also a centennial prayer and hymn that will be officially presented before the inauguration of our celebration.

The committee also revised other suggestions made by friars and lay people. A questionnaire based on those suggestions is now being studied by each member of the committee to see what can or cannot be done in their region.

The calendar of activities is being worked on by each country where the Province is present.

AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT NUNS AND SISTERS ...

Contemplative nuns bake bread for the needy under COVID lockdown

BACOLOD CITY-- The Augustinian Recollect Nuns of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Monastery in Bacolod not only prayed for everyone but participated in the early initiatives to help those affected by the COVID lockdown starting from March 2020.



They made PPEs (face masks, and medical gowns) for frontliners and others from their dress-making workshop. They also transformed their Recoletos Farm Store into a “Kindness Bakery” that distributed bread to poor communities. The “Kindness Bakery” answered the needs of people who found it difficult to source food under a lockdown. “Our monastic calling is also to impart Christ’s saving mission to humanity, we are praying unceasingly with the world and for our people; and at the same time we are in real

solidarity with them...” said Sr. Carmen Orduña, OAR, former Prioress of the community.

ARCORES International started the bread distribution campaign in Naga and Minglanilla in Cebu in partnership with Pusyon Kinaiyahan, Franciscan Friars of Charity and Discalced Augustinians. The Kindness Bakery forms part of the “Kindness Station” campaign of NASSA/Caritas Philippines, that aims to provide food and other assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.



To Support our Project please contact the following:

International/online:

PayPal

www.paypal.me/arcores

- open the site/click the link.
- enter donation amount.
- add a note: COVID Filipinas
- send.

Local:

Mother Maria Emy A. Catalonia, OAR
Augustinian Recollect Nuns of
St. Ezekiel Moreno Monastery
Tangub, Bacolod City
Negros Occidental
Philippines
Contact Number: 09166250017

Fray Raymund Alcedo, OAR
Arcores Philippines
San Sebastián College - Recoletos de Cavite
Cavite City, Philippines



Bacolod Monastery receives novice

BACOLOD CITY –On the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, May 1, 2020, our postulant Sr. Flora Mae Cañete began her novitiate formation. She was accepted by Rev. Mo. Maria Emy A. Catalonia, OAR, the present Mother Prioress of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Monastery community. Mo. Emy, entrusted the care and formation of Sr. Flora Mae to Sr. Ma. Del Carmen Orduña, OAR, the present Novice Mistress.

Sr. Flora Mae hails from Brgy. Bana-go, Bacolod City. She was a former student of UNO-R. While studying at the university, she felt the call to the religious life when she, together with her group of friends, had a visit to the monastery. This visit awakened her desire for religious and contemplative life. After few years of discernment and formation as an aspirant, she entered the monastery last January 15, 2016 at the age of 22.





“Today marks the beginning of her new journey. The learning how to climb the mountain of holiness and become a daughter of St. Augustine and of the Augustinian Recollection. With one heart and soul intent upon God, let us join her in thanking God for the gift of Contemplative vocation and becoming also as one of the front liners in prayer. Let us also pray for her holy perseverance in the journey to become the person God wants her to be. Amen.”

*Mo. Maria Emy Catalonia, OAR
first Filipina Prioress of the community*

Sewing for the sowers

Carla C. Canet

The parable of the sower (Luke 7:11;18) has its pious significance in the lives of people. The seed (word of God) that fell on good soil or on people who received the word, pondered on it and persevered, bore fruit.

Several contemplative nuns of St. Ezekiel Moreno Monastery in Bacolod City made use of their time to sew fabric face masks and make personal protective equipment (PPEs) for medical frontliners.

Agnes Lira Jundo, broadcast journalist, had the opportunity to visit the cloistered nuns who consider their contemplative lives as infinite quarantine to serve God and fellow men. “They were sewing for the sowers and were happy to share those essentials to those in need of them,” Jundos said. They continue to pray for humanity that they will be able to survive the grueling effects of Covid-19 to the people and the economy. “I was able to get in touch with them recently relative to the anniversary of the conversion of St. Augustine last Friday. They said that they would like people to know and appreciate our contemplative life,” she added.



In infinite quarantine to serve the Lord and people

She recalled that she met the nuns of St. Ezekiel Monastery while she was serving as the communications consultant for the Office of the EVP for External Affairs of the OAR Community at University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos in Bacolod City where they had an official visit to the

monastery during the centennial of the death of their patron saint Ezekiel Moreno sometime in 2006. “I got in touch with them again when I asked for a medal with relics of St. Ezekiel Moreno requested by a friend from Iloilo whose uncle is a devotee of St. Ezekiel, a cancer survivor,” she said.

(Reprinted from SunStar Bacolod (sunstar.com.ph))



IESA recognizes Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters

Bangkok, THAILAND—The International Education Summit and Awards recognizes the Congregation of the Augustinian Recollect Sisters as an outstanding school for imparting values education on February 22, 2020, held at Devalux Resort and Spa, Bangkok, Thailand.

The award was received by Sr. Mary Ann J. Lumactao, A.R., third councilor and superintendent of the A.R. Schools. At the same time, she represented the Congregation in Education Summit attended by dedicated educators with notable speakers.



Value the Vocation of SARF

Fray Miguel Miró, OAR addressed a fraternal message to the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity on the occasion of the solemnity of Pentecost.

The evangelizing mission of the Augustinian Recollect family does not correspond only to the religious; it also corresponds to the laity. The Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, Fray Miguel Miro, OAR, called on the co-responsibility of religious and lay people. He asks the religious to “value the vocation of those lay people who feel called to live the Augustinian Recollect spirituality”. On his part, to the consecrated lay people he calls “to embrace their lay vocation, to assume their identity and autonomy, and to commit themselves to be part of the Augustinian Recollect family”.

Fray Miró has sent a message to the religious and members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity within the framework of the celebration of the solemnity of Pentecost to be held this Sunday. The Prior General reflects in the document on the role of the laity in the Augustinian Recollect family, to whom he indicates that “the time has come in the Church”. Mentioning St. John Paul II, the superior general of the Order points out the importance of sharing the charism with the laity, keeping in mind that in this union one can “discover unexpected and fruitful implications of some aspects of the charism”.

The Prior General also asks if any religious doubts that the laity of the SARF really share the charism: “Do we really believe it?” He asked the Augustinian Recollects to “welcome, encourage and accompany them”. “On this feast of the Holy Spirit, I want to call on the religious to accept the Augustinian Recollect vocation of the lay faithful as a gift from God”, he said. Along these lines, Fray Miró attached the document ‘Joy in Hope’, in which he asked the religious “to be interested in getting to know the fraternities, taking into account their identity and autonomy”. He also comments on the new formative itinerary for the new members of the SARF, as well as the

first international meeting of secular Augustinian Recollects to be held in 2021 (originally it was in 2020 but has been postponed).

On the solemnity of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Prior General invited us to open our hearts: “Let the Spirit dwell in our hearts; let us be inspired and moved by Him”. In this sense, he affirms that “He calls us and leads us to follow Jesus, to be united to him and to be with passion and simplicity prophets of the Kingdom”.

Fray Miró indicates that to live in fraternal communion and to live the Gospel it is necessary to receive the grace and strength of “the joy of the Spirit”. “The Spirit heals the wounds of our heart and gives us the strength to approach, like the Good Samaritan, those who suffer and are in need in these difficult moments that humanity is living”, he says.

For the day before Pentecost, the SARF organized a virtual meeting on May 30th for all the lay Augustinian Recollects. The meeting will begin at eight o'clock in the morning (Mexico time) with the office of reading, lauds and holy rosary, transmitted from the Facebook page of Mother of God Parish in Czestochowa.

Later, at nine o'clock in the morning (Mexican time), on the Youtube channel of CEAR Television Network, the Pentecost retreat will be available for the SARF in a video of approximately one hour. The virtual day will conclude with the celebration of the Pentecost Eucharist from the church of San Ildefonso and Santo Tomás de Villanueva in Rome, broadcast by CEAR Television Network on Facebook and Youtube.

The Augustinian Recollect Francisco Javier Monroy, General Councilor in charge of the Fray, invited the participants to participate in this gathering by connecting the different platforms to the different moments of prayer. He especially asked to “live Pentecost as Augustinian Recollects”.

From Storm to Advent: SARF's online Advent Recollection with Fr. René Paglinawan, OAR

Sis. Marina Yang SAR (Mira Nila Chapter)

“From Storm to Advent”, an Advent recollection conducted last December 5, 2020 by Fray René Paglinawan, OAR, Prior of Our Lady of Good Voyage Parish, Tondo and the spiritual adviser of the SARF de OLPGV Chapter, Tondo, ushered in so many changes but it was an immense success.



The recollection was participated by 185 participants from 18 chapters in the Philippines and 10 from Kamalo, Sierra Leone. Fray Jose Prudencio Castillo, OAR, spiritual adviser of SARF de Kamalo, accompanied his flock.

Thanks to the advancement of video conferencing the recollection also included group sharing among different chapters. For the first time, the newly established SARF chapters from Our Lady of Visitation Parish, Urbiztondo, Pangasinan and far-away Sierra Leone, South Africa also joined.

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Members of SARF de Sierra Leone, together with Fray Castillo, joined the online Advent recollection with their brothers and sisters in the Philippines.

Our Blessed Mother Mary was the central figure of this Advent recollection. The participants were guided through the scriptural rosary- events which Mary experienced, starting with the disturbing

announcement of archangel Gabriel that she, a virgin, would bear a son; to seeing her son Jesus suffer, crucified and die at the cross. Fray Paglinawan said that through all these events, Mary was full of grace – obedient, humble, pondering words in her heart, suffering silently and patiently. She stood her ground. With the resurrection of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit was the establishment of the Church. Mary was there too, her mere presence a steadfast witness and strength for those around her. Truly a Queen of Heaven and Earth.



Fray Paglinawan reminded us that we too experience storms in our lives of which the current pandemic is a good example. This was a cause for discomfort, loss of income, sickness even deaths of loved ones. Fray Rene asked in these depressing times, do we see Jesus passing by? Do we recognize Him, He who calmed the storm at sea?

The biggest storm of Jesus was His crucifixion and death on the cross. The centurion standing by was converted. Likewise, storms in our lives should be occasions for evangelization and conversion for others. As Mary and St. John the Baptist were “spotlights”, and Jesus must always be the “limelight”, he said.

With guided questions, the participants were broken into groups for reflection and short reports given after. This Advent preparation activity was capped with an anticipated Holy Mass integrated with vespers and the Promise of Renewal, a fitting joyful spiritual exercise to celebrate the 432nd OAR Foundation Day.



185 participants from 18 chapters in the Philippines and 10 from Kamalo, Sierra Leone.

SARF de Filipinas' birthday tribute to Fray Selma

Sis. Star A. Anotado SAR (Antipolo Chapter)

QUEZON CITY—The Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity Philippines (SARF de Filipinas) organized a successful and first virtual birthday tribute for Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno. Fray Selma turned 61 on October 26, 2020 and was cheered by 96 SARF members from the 17 chapters as well several priests from the curia.

The virtual affair was hosted by Sis Fe Violeta B. Taring, SAR, National Councilor for the Visayas. The opening prayer was led by Sis Ceres C. Alcantara, SAR, 1st Councilor for Luzon and the welcome greetings was delivered by Bro. Edwin T. Ruiz, SAR, SARF National President.

One of the highlights of the virtual program was the video presentation of the passing of the birthday cake. All chapters participated in this very innovative idea of the passing of the cake starting from Visayas, then Palawan to Luzon and finally to the Provincialate House where a real cake was handed by Fray Bernabe M. Dosdos, OAR, SARF National Spiritual Adviser, to Fray Selma.

Birthday greetings from some SARF chapters were also streamed via Zoom, including one from SARF de Kamalo, Sierra Leone, Africa. The simplicity of their greeting was heartwarming. Other entertaining numbers include a musical rendition by Sis Digna Pacis, SAR and Sis Emilie Pandong, SAR (SARF de Provincialate), a tiktok dance by Sis Lucy Anareta, SAR (SARF de SEMoNoRe) with her cute and talented grandchildren, a birthday song by SARF de UNO-R chapter, another tiktok dance (SARF de SEMSDC) and a vocal rendition by Sis Marlin Regalado, SAR (SARF de Mira Nila).



To add more spice and excitement to the virtual party, a short game was also conducted where SARF members unscrambled words related to Fray Selma. Bro. Jacobz Cabanes, SAR (SARF de Baguio) and daughter, Nyle also performed a praiseworthy song number.

The highlight of the celebration was of course the very meaningful message from the celebrant. The Prior Provincial thanked everyone – from the national spiritual adviser, the national president and officers, SARF chapter presidents and all members of the SARF community for their creative and commendable efforts to make the virtual affair successful.

Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity

Fr. Selma also stressed that birthdays are opportunities to be grateful to God who made everything possible. In a way, Jesus is practically the main celebrant sent by the Father to save us. “The real birthday is the birthday of the Lord and we just share the life that He has for us, he reminded us.

Everyone should also consider it a time to reflect about the past, evaluate the present and to plan the future. In addition to that, he also mentioned that we should focus on our purpose in life because God can cut it short anytime. He quoted Psalm 90 “Seventy years is all we have, eighty years if we are strong...”.



Lastly, he asked everyone to remember the dead members of the Order and the SARF especially because November 1 and 2 were fast approaching. He also asked for prayers for the meeting of the General Council with the Priors Provincial which will be done virtually and will last for one week.

As the program started with a prayer so it was befitting that it was also ended with another prayer by Sis Evangeline Gubatao, SAR, National Councilor for Cebu.

Special thanks to our SARF National Spiritual Adviser, Fray Bernabe Dosdos, OAR, Bro. Edwin T. Ruiz, SAR, SARF National President, Sis Ma. Windie “Marwin” M. Oane, SAR, SARF National Secretary and Bro. Jocabz A. Cabanes, SAR for their untiring efforts to make this affair memorable.

SARF holds first national online novenas

Jayzl Villafania Nebre, SAR (Provincialate Chapter)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Rom 8:35) This was a question posed by the greatest Christian theologian who has ever lived to the Romans about two thousand years ago. Clearly, this question still holds true during this time when we are locked inside our homes and not able to attend to the devotions that we have held all these years.

But a heart flaming with love could not easily be extinguished. And so, some members of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity have discovered the wonders of modern technology to bring each one closer to each other and reaffirm our love to God, the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Hence, the series of online novenas were brought to light. Starting from the Novena to Saint Ezequiel Moreno to Saint Augustine and finally until the Novena to Our Lady of Health, the fraternity proved that no pandemic will separate us from the love of Christ.

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It started with several members of the Provincialate Chapter wishing to continue their devotion to the Sacred Heart despite the pandemic. Someone realized that they can make a group call on Facebook Messenger, so why not try praying together using this app. Given the consistent attendance of the people in the Divine Mercy prayers, Sis. Rosario Galang SAR (Provincialate Chapter) suggested to have this practice extended to the celebration of the Lauds and Vespers, a move that was received with joy by the members.

Of course, we all know that a lot of our members are not cybercitizens, so it was not a walk in the park to have the meetings organized. The first meetings were quite noisy. Everyone was

and learning a new tool is a new challenge to them. With a little insistence, convincing every one of the merits of Zoom, Sis. Digna was able to convince everyone to finally migrate to Zoom.

Then came the preparation for the Novena to Saint Augustine. At first, it was planned to pray the novena after the Vespers, like what the chapter did during the Novena to our Lady of Mount Carmel. But, as they say, if you feel the love of God, it is not possible to contain it in your heart. You will feel the need to share it.

Feeling this call to share it with the rest of the fraternity, Sis. Zeny Lapuz SAR (Provincialate Chapter) suggested to the national council the possibility of holding the Great Feasts of the Order



trying to answer all at the same time. And given the internet connection in the country, some of the responses lagged making it really chaotic to say the least.

Sis. Digna Pacis, suggested the use of Zoom, a web-meeting app that has become a popular tool lately. At first, it was not a very well accepted solution. A lot of the members have been accustomed to use FB Messenger already

using the same format. The national council needed very little convincing. It was approved just as soon as it was suggested. Members of the various chapters were more than willing to say yes to the call. With a little planning, each chapter was given a day to lead the novena. They zealously looked forward to their turns.

Understandably, it was not easy for everyone. Some chapters had a problem when it comes to internet connection. With a heavy

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heart, some chapters had to beg off. Others were so prepared, yet when the day came, their internet connection faltered. Others were not able to join due to the weather's effect on the signal.

Then came the worst challenge. Typhoon Ulysses hit the NCR and Rizal regions which disturbed the power sources. A day of novena to Nuestra Señora de la Salud had to be called off. But, clearly the habit of prayer has already consumed the hearts of everyone. They decided to continue praying during the usual time, as if they were still united in Zoom. God heard the prayers. The following day, all came back praying together having a stronger desire to be united with each other in prayer. Needless to say, we were able to finish all the devotions in this new environment.

But praying together is not the only thing that resulted from this exercise. Whereas before, members of the fraternity would only meet each other once a year, during the national assembly, we had more time to meet and know each other.

It was really a moment where we showed how much we missed each other.

The reality is, we felt closer to each other than ever before. We came to ask each other about their situations. We learned right away which members of the fraternity got sick of the virus, or perhaps their family members. We were also able to celebrate the birthday of some people online. We teased each other like long lost brothers and sisters. This and more than we could express in words.

So, whenever we read this question, "Who will separate us from the Love of Christ?" we will be very confident to answer. Nothing and no one. We knew it in our hearts that this experience will be very memorable. And while we don't wish the pandemic to be extended any further, what we did will show us that we will find more creative ways to pray together when future challenges come before us.

SARF in Pangasinan initiated

URBIZTONDO --On the feast day of St. Magdalene of Nagasaki, Fray Samson S. Silloriquuez, OAR, Local Prior of the Recoletos de Urbiztondo, celebrated the Holy Eucharist together with the 16 aspirants to the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity.

As their local Spiritual Director, Fray Silloriquuez has already initiated the formation program for these candidates since the month of August 2020. Twice a month, the candidates have a formation in line with the historical background as well as the spirituality of this lay fraternity.

Fray Silloriquuez intensely facilitated the formation of these aspirants so as for them to be oriented and be familiar with the identity of the said organization.





SARs from Kamalo brighten 2020 virtual fiesta celebrations

QUEZON CITY – SARs from Kamalo, Sierra Leone brightened the first virtual fiesta celebration of St. Magdalene of Nagasaki, patroness of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF).

On October 20, SARF de Sierra Leone, the 17th chapter in the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno met their brothers and sisters across the world through Zoom.

They joined 16 other chapters from the Philippines in the celebrations which started with the Holy Mass streamed live from San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish church in Quezon City and during the post-missam program that lasted up to 9:30 p.m. Fray Dionisio Selma OAR, prior provincial, presided the Eucharistic celebration with the Provincialate friars as concelebrants.

Bro. Edwin Ruiz, SARF national president said there are 16 chapters in the Philippines : 10 in Luzon and six in the Visayas. With the presence of the newly-established chapter in Recoletos de Kamalo in Sierra Leone, West Africa, the total is now 17.

This year's gathering was further marked with "international" atmosphere not only because of the African delegates but also of the participation of the Prior General, Fray Miguel Miró, who virtually delivered his message live from the General Curia in Rome. Fray Raul Buhay OAR, also in Rome stood as his interpreter.

Fray Jose Prudencio "Dennis" Castillo, prior of Recoletos de Kamalo community and spiritual director of the SARF chapter, narrated how the plan to establish a group of secular Recollects in Kamabai and Kamalo started in 2018. "This was not realized because the missionaries did not see yet the 'it' factor in them, and Kamabai still lacked a good number of married couples."

On February 21, 2020, Fray Castillo sought permission from Father Provincial to found a chapter in Kamalo in accordance with the

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OAR Constitutions 114: “Secular fraternities may be erected ... by the local priors with permission of the Prior Provincial.” The major superior gave his approval.

Six days later, on February 27, Bishop Natale Paganelli SX of the Diocese of Makeni where the Recollect mission stations belong, also gave his approval and blessing. The group’s first meeting on March 14 oriented the 12 candidates – all sacramentally married couples – to the observance of the SARF Statutes and their “Life and Mission Project” (LAMP).



“Every Saturday I give them input as part of their formation program, thanks to the guidance of Bro. Edwin Ruiz,” Fray Castillo reported, acknowledging his being a neophyte in this kind of ministry. He also said that he follows the lecture-type, and not just gives them hand-outs, as most of them cannot read nor write which, in turn, becomes a herculean challenge in terms of the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. “But we are still trying to solve this,” he said with optimism.

Although the birth of this new SARF chapter in Kamalo where the Recollects have been working since 2007 has added a feather in the cap of the Recollect mission in Sierra Leone, Fray Castillo’s ardent prayer is: “Sana mag-persevere po sila.” (“I hope they will persevere.”)

Proudly Sierra Leonean! The pioneer SARF members of Sierra Leone. Tenke boku (Thank you very much)

Fray Mansueto discusses Spiritual Warfare: A recollection with Sarf

Bro. Wilson Sy SAR (Casiciaco Chapter)

BAGUIO CITY—UNDAS, it’s that time of the year when we remember our departed loved ones. For Filipinos, this is also a time for reunion with the living but the COVID-19 pandemic had dramatically changed how we commemorate the event.

But despite the risks inherent under a pandemic, one thing we can all agree on is that November 1 is associated instantly with the word ‘Halloween’, a word which had confused many in so many ways. The term connotes how we remember not only the dead but also the spirits and the otherworldly entities that we grew up hearing about. We spend time reminiscing horror stories we love to

frighten ourselves with. This practice should be studied properly according to our Catholic Christian faith, in the context of the Filipino setting.

The SARF communities recently had Fray Alexis Mansueto, OAR, Spiritual Director and Exorcist currently assigned in Recoletos de Baguio (Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary), to offer his thoughts, experiences, and advice in a recollection. Around 100 SARs joined the Zoom conference last October 31, 2020. Fray Manuel “Maning”

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Lipardo, OAR, spiritual adviser of SARF de Inagawan, joined the conference.

The recollection started at 2:00 PM with the song 'Have Thine Own Way, Lord,' followed by a proper prayer by Fray Mansueto invoking the protection and guidance of St. Michael the Archangel and our dear personal angels.

Fray Buloy, as our recollection master is known, introduced the theme of the recollection: 'Spiritual Warfare: Knowing and Resisting the Devil in Daily Life.' Fr. Buloy began by explaining about angels and demons, and the need to put on the armor of God. The prayer is needed because there's a higher form of evil aside from the mere absence of good (such as physical evil, e.g., sickness, and moral evil, e.g. corruption in the government). The higher form of evil is the devil himself who Fray Buloy said, was an angel who on his own will chose to go astray and disobey God. We, humans, encounter the devil practically in every moment of our life, and temptations are just one of the many manifestations of his wit, presence, and influence.

Fray Buloy said that since we are engaged in a "spiritual combat", it's prerogative that we put on the armor of God lest we falter in fear and corruption. Citing Paul Thigpen, in his work 'Manual for Spiritual Warfare,' Fray Buloy said knowing the enemy is the first rule of any type of warfare.

Knowing the enemy will help in avoiding dangers an evil encounter may bring. Fray Buloy further explained the devil is the king of deception who loves not to be recognized as himself but to be identified by us as something or somebody else. We are in a constant battle with the enemy, and the Devil—who cannot make the Mother Church fall—will primarily target families which is the source of all vocation.

Fray Buloy also gave examples of how much we really need the proper guidance of Divine Revelation and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church in this era where the devil is very loud and clear. There are many sources of deception even in the 21st century, he said, foremost of which are superstitions, myths, urban legends, occult, new-age teachings that run counter to what our Mother Church is teaching. Fray Buloy gave as an example a common belief among Filipinos that the soul of an infant who died will turn into an angel, which he said is impossible because humans can never be angels because the latter



are pure spirits.

These are his lectures about angels. Angels were created by God for two reasons: 1) to proclaim or sing God's majesty and glory, and 2) to execute God's will in creation. Angels are non-corporeal, they have no material body, instead are of pure spirit. They originally belong in the preternatural world but were escalated to the supernatural world

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with God after the fall. Angels have a far superior intelligence and authority compared to man, and they also have their personality and will (yes, they can choose to disobey God, such as what the fallen angels did). Proper to their nature, God has assigned them names, but these names are unknown to men unless revealed. There are only four angels who were named St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and lastly, Lucifer. No other real names were revealed and as such Fray Buloy said, any other names might be demonic and we all should be wary of admitting them or calling upon them.

Envy, hatred, and Pride—three of the most agreed primary reasons why some angels chose to disobey God and thus fell to damnation. Though it wasn't clear in the scriptures, the teachings of the church cite such disobedience has something to do with God's plan of creating man in His image and likeness, and of becoming human in form as a God-Man. Much more tension arose when God declared a woman—Mary—to be the God-bearer and will be higher and more supreme over the angels. For these reasons, the fallen angels chose not to serve God.

They couldn't accept God taking the very benign form of man, much less bowing before Mary who is also very human albeit immaculate.

Their rejection of God and man's destiny is absolute and radical based on their nature, and hence irrevocable, turning them into perpetually perverted spiritual living beings. They are incapable of repentance and redemption, that's why they are angry with the idea that men, despite their efforts, may still get to heaven.

Fr. Buloy continued with discussing the capabilities of the devil as the master seducer and deceiver, whose actions were not to only tempt human beings away from God, but to also scorn and chain them to bondage leading to spiritual blindness or destruction. As deception is natural to these fallen angels, they are capable by their nature to be anything or anyone they want to be, be it an elemental (like a dwarf or fairies), Mother Mary, or a human being (deceased or not). Through idolatry (e.g., saying *tabi-tabi po* to a soil mound, or making offerings to the dead or to an invisible entity) and moral corruption (e.g., same-sex marriage, abortion, etc.), the devil succeeds in his perverted mission of capturing the hearts of men.

The actions of the devil can be either ordinary (e.g., through temptations), or extraordinary which requires help. For the latter, we have demonic obsessions (intrusion or attack on the sensibility of a subject), demonic



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oppressions (sudden or chronic torment on the physical body through inexplicable causes or signs), demonic infestations (for places, animals, and inanimate objects), demonic possessions (the demons taking over the body), and demonic subjugation (when a victim becomes an accomplice already).

Malignos/Engkantos are technically called 'Elementals.' They are nature spirits who are fallen angels capable of inflicting harm, and they inhabit things in nature such as trees and rocks. They take such forms (elves, sirens, etc.) as myths and fantasies have appropriated them to be so that they can be identifiable to us humans. Giving in to their rules is an act of idolatry, and the best way to counter them or at least to protect one's self is to pray the proper Catholic prayers taught to us, even the basic ones. Jesus Christ is, after all, the sovereign God above all these fake gods.

So what can we do? Fray Buloy said we should acknowledge the presence of our guardian angels, who from the beginning of time until death, stand alongside us in helping God fulfill his eternal plan on us. These guardian angels

are protectors not only of our souls but also of our bodies, and their influence on our daily lives depends on how much we are believers and how much we are willing to participate in our spiritual growth. In our spiritual warfare, we must not believe that the famous prayer 'Angel of God' is only for children; it is rather a powerful prayer that we can cite to protect us from evil spirits. At the end of our daily battle, we have the angels as loyal friends whom God has given us as our wards unique to each and every one of us.

Fray Buloy also touched on several practices like doing the 40 days celebration after the death of a person, a blessing of a houses, looking out for signs of demonic infestations. Fray Buloy then blessed the water, oil, salt, and candle prepared by the participants. These sacramentals may be used in the fight against the devil.

Fray Buloy reminded us that in all kinds of demonic attacks regardless of gravity, it is always a call for us for renewal or conversion. It is our job to be ready, wear the armor of God, cooperate with our guardian angels, fight the good fight, and live the faith to the best of our ability.

RECOLLECT AUGUSTINIAN YOUTH (RAY) ...

‘Discernment’ isn’t about your will

BAGUIO CITY — Fr. Jason Laguerta’s vocation story began with his favorite meal of spaghetti and fried chicken.

Fr. Laguerta, parish priest of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Sta. Mesa, Manila, said when he was young, he could only eat his favorite food on his birthdays. And yet his mom would prepare them every Sunday for the priest who would be saying mass in the nearby chapel where she was the gatekeeper. “E mana ako sa mama ko na matalino, kaya inutakan ko na siya. Nagsakristan ako kay Monsignor para makakain din ng paborito kong spaghetti at fried chicken,” he told the amused Recollect Augustinian Youth (RAY) delegates.

Fr. Laguerta, was the speaker on the topic of “discernment” on the third day of the RAY National Summit held at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in this city from January 20 to 24, 2020. A professor at the San Carlos Seminary in Makati, he said the word “discernment” comes from the Latin “disco”, “discere”, which means “to know or to learn”. “But discernment is not just about knowing what you want to do in life, but rather, discovering the will of God in your life,” he told the seminarians and 159 RAY delegates coming from twenty Recollect communities from all over the country.

He said as an act, discernment is always an “act of faith”. The Filipino word for faith — pananampalataya — he said can be divided into two words: “pananam”, meaning “to taste”; and “palataya”, meaning “to put a wager on”. He said discernment is like that. One should put a wager on God’s will for one’s life. “The problem with us,” he said, “is that we all want to choose”.



Fr. Jason Laguerta receives the token of gratitude from Fray Allan Jacinto, OAR, national vocation director of the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, Order of Augustinian Recollects.

Luckily for the delegates, Fr. Laguerta gave practical tips on how to discern. He said the youth can make well-discerned decisions in life by looking for the three elements of discernment: the call, the gifts, and the needs.

“If this is your vocation, your heart would have a natural desire for it because it was God who planted it in your hearts when he created you, as the holy bishop St. Augustine would put it,” Fr. Laguerta said.

“And if this is really your calling, you would also receive gifts that would help you respond to the call. Lastly, if this is your calling and you can see that you have what it takes — the gifts — to respond to the call, you would also notice that in the Church and in the world, there are needs that your gifts could address.”

Discernment, therefore, is being attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, for eventually, “it is not our own will that we seek, but God’s.” “Discernment is the gradual process of knowing God’s will in our lives,” he said. In every discernment, he added, it is important to seek accompaniment from someone you respect, like a spiritual director. And all throughout the process, always find time to be in silence and pray. “Know that God has a plan for each one of us, and with faith,

we commit ourselves to our decision. If you are at peace with your decision, no matter how hard or demanding your choice may be, you can be assured that you have made a well-discerned decision,” he said.

Fr. Laguerta’s vocation story may just have started with his favorite spaghetti and fried chicken, but it certainly did not stop there. He underwent a long



process of discernment in order to be what he is today: a priest of Jesus Christ serving in different capacities in the Archdiocese of Manila, such as director of the Office for the Promotion of New Evangelization (OPNE) and the Archdiocesan Institute for Research and Development, addressing different needs with his varied gifts.

CaReS hosts 159 delegates for 13th RAY nat’l summit

BAGUIO CITY— Maria Theresa Aranco had to leave Cebu City on January 19, 2020 — the one Sunday when the whole island was celebrating its world famous Sinulog festival in honor of the Sto. Niño — just to catch her 8:00 PM flight bound for Manila.

A staff of the Campus Ministry Office of the Cebu-based University of San Jose-Recoletos main campus, she was tasked to accompany two USJ-R delegates to the 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit (RAYNS) held in this city from January 20 to 24. The summit had for its theme, “I am RAY: A Message and a Messenger”.

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“We were not able to enjoy the Sinulog. But it’s okay; joining the national summit is always a good and exciting experience for our delegates to get to know other Recollect Augustinian Youths (RAY) and to grow in their knowledge and love of the Order,” she said.

The USJ-R delegation joined other RAY members (159) from 20 Recollect communities and the 16 Recollect religious who accompanied them at the Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary (CaReS). The event, held every two years ran from January 20 to January 24. “The Recollects, aware of the important role the young people play in the writing of our history as a people, do their best in helping them,” Fray Joseph Dexter Palagtiosa, OAR, head of the Section on Youth Ministry, said in his welcome message. He added that the summit is designed to “provide the youth with opportunities to grow into responsible and responsive citizens of the future.”

The neophyte seminarians present a play about seminary life during the first night of the 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit last January 20, 2020.

The 13th RAY national summit was somewhat different from the previous twelve,

Fray Palagtiosa said. It had a more serious tone, doing away with the angel-and-soul buddy system between seminarians and delegates, group dynamics, and city tours, among others. The summit touched on issues that concern the youth like the Church’s perspective on human sexuality, vocational discernment, responsible social media usage, and the Recollect Augustinian identity. Fray Palagtiosa said the summit was designed that way to emphasize the solemn installation of active members and the election of national officers.

The solemn installation is a “big deal” Fray Palagtiosa said, because “they will be considered as members of the fourth order of the Recollect family. The First Order being the religious” (priests, brothers, and coristas), the second being the OAR contemplative nuns and missionaries and the Third, the lay, Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF). “RAY aims to form the modern youth with the Augustinian Recollect spirituality,” said Fray Palagtiosa. “They may find themselves swimming against the tide of modern life, but with the guidance of the religious and the lay leaders and collaborators around them, they have all the means to become both the message and the messenger of God’s love.

RAYNS Day 2: Talks center on youth evangelization, sex, and sexuality

BAGUIO CITY — A priest active in the youth ministry was the lone speaker during the second day of the 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit (RAYNS) held at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in this city last January 21, 2020.

Fr. Juvelan Paul Samia, a member of the Salesians of Don Bosco, discussed youth evangelization in the morning; and sex and sexuality in the afternoon.

After a brief welcome program by the seminarians at the seminary entrance hall, the RAY delegates congregated at the seminary chapel and listened to Fr. Samia who told them that they hold the key to modern-day evangelization. “Paano ba maabot ang mga kabataang hindi abot ng Simbahan?” he asked. “Ang sagot ay alam ng kabataang Agustino Rekoleta!”

Fr. Samia, who is the head of the Salesian Youth Movement Philippines–North Province, told the delegates that the Church needs their creativity in reaching out to other youths who do not yet enjoy the friendship of Jesus as much as

they do. He enjoined them not to shy away from the task because what they are proclaiming are not their own message but God’s. But to be effective in what they would do, he said, it is imperative that they “make an honest effort to live the Gospel message” by living “authentic” Christian lives. “Our words would lack the power necessary to move people if we do not live up to the mystery we represent,” he said. He said the question is not whether what the Christians preach is true or not, but whether Christians can practice what they preach. “The world acknowledges that our Catholic message is correct and true. But we can be imposing sometimes, which greatly turns people off,” he said. Hence, more than preaching with words, he echoed the rector of the seminary, Fr. Bernard C. Amparado, OAR, who had charged the delegates a day earlier to preach by example. “Be careful in everything that you



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say or do,” Fr. Samia said. “You might be the only Gospel accessible to others.”

The Church, Sex, and Sexuality. Discussions got interesting in the afternoon after Fr. Samia moved from the concerns of modern-day evangelization to sex and sexuality. He said society propagates a misconception that the Catholic Church “would want to starve the world from sex,” a fact which he claimed to have been far from the truth. “Kalugod-lugod po sa mata ng Diyos ang pagkikipagtalik sa tamang tao, sa tamang panahon, at sa tamang kondisyon,” he said. God, the author of sex, intended sex to be an expression of unitive and procreative love between the man and the woman bound together by the sacrament of matrimony.

Using St. John Paul II’s famous lecture series compiled into a book called “Theology of the Body”, Fr. Samia said sin has so “wounded” and “distorted” the heart of the man and the woman so that instead of giving and sacrificing in the name of love, man resorts to taking for himself; instead of love-making, sex becomes lustful. He said the man, endowed with physical and interior strength, is called to mirror God in the Old Testament who is a warrior. The woman, for her part, is supposed to mirror God’s mystery and should be modest in her manners. “But the woundedness of man’s heart causes him to dominate others, prove many things because he

feels he is not strong enough,” Fr. Samia said. “The woundedness of a woman’s heart makes her think she is not beautiful enough, so she resorts to immodest behavior in order to affirm her desirability.”

He insisted that man is supposed to be a warrior and love and protect the woman, even from himself. The woman, on the other hand, should reserve her body for him to whom she would give the right to love her for the rest of her life, sealed by the sacrament of holy matrimony, and not just to anybody else. “The body is not just biological, but more importantly, theological,” he said. “It reveals God: who he is and what his plans for us are.” He added that apart from each other, neither man nor woman makes complete sense. “I will have to say this very respectfully, but firmly: man is not made for another man,” he said. “Our bodies are a reminder of who we are and who we are called to be.”

He said Jesus Christ did not just save man’s soul from eternal damnation, but his body as well. Physical strength, he added, is part of being man. But what defines man more than anything else is his interior strength. “Jesus Christ is the model of manhood which we ought to imitate because he showed true interior strength when he spread his arms on the cross to save us all. That is the true meaning of masculinity.”





Fr. Buloy to 13th Raysters: Imitate Jesus and Mary

BAGUIO CITY—Many talks were given to drive home the point of the theme for this year's 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit (RAYNS), which is, "I am RAY: A Message and a Messenger." But the Seminary Liturgist and Senior High School Spiritual Director, Fray Alexis Mansueto, OAR, might have given the runaway winner in the soundbite department in the reflection he shared with the delegates during the 6 PM Votive Mass in honor of the Our Lady of Consolation last January 21, 2020. "To become the message, you have to be like Christ; to become the messenger, be like Mary," Fr. Buloy (as he is fondly called by seminarians) said in his homily in a clear allusion to the summit's theme.

The 13th gathering of Recollect Augustinian Youth (RAY) attracted 159 delegates from twenty Recollect communities nationwide. The summit, slated from January 20 to 24, 2020, was held at the Order's Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in the City of Pines. Fr. Buloy expressed an urgent call for youth reformation in the Church and in the world. "The youth of today are like the two disciples going to Emmaus: confused, disoriented, chatty, and sad," he said.

This reformation can be addressed by looking at the example of the Blessed Mother who lived a life of contemplative and prayerful silence, and yet always ready at a moment's notice to lend a helping hand to others, for she is full of

love that made her ever willing to make sacrifices. Her ultimate sacrifice, though — Fray. Buloy stressed — took place when she stood by her Son's cross on Calvary, weeping silently without even uttering a word, a demonstration of her total surrender to the will of the Father.

Fray Buloy said when Jesus from the cross told John to "Behold your mother" (John 19:27), he is asking all mankind to always look to Mary for comfort and consolation for she has given the world its savior and redeemer. "The challenge for all of us is to look at Mary at the foot of the cross, and find joy in suffering with Christ and the marginalized," he said.

Fr. Provincial accepts 93 full-fledged RAY

BAGUIO CITY — New members were added to the growing family of the Order of Augustinian Recollects (OAR) in the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.

Prior provincial Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR, formally accepted ninety-three (93) young people during their solemn installation as full-fledged members of the Recollect Augustinian Youth last January 23, 2020. “It is not the Order that you follow,” Fr. Selma told the RAY in his homily. “Jesus is whom you follow, so don’t be afraid. He calls you here; he will guide you with his grace.”

The RAY is considered the “fourth member of the Order,” said Fr. Joseph Dexter Palagtiosa, OAR, head of the Section on Youth Ministry; the other three being the priests and religious, nuns and missionaries, and the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF).

The solemn installation of full-fledged members of RAY was one of the highlights of the 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit (RAYNS) held at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in this city from January 20 to 24, 2020.

The national youth summit was attended by 159 delegates coming from at least twenty Recollect communities from all over the country. Of the figure, sixty-six (66) were observers while the ninety-three

(93) were the ones who successfully completed their long formation classes which were a requirement prior to their admission into the RAY. “The grace of God called you to be a Youth for Christ in the Augustinian Recollect way of life,” Fray Selma said. “Your life should reflect that grace.” Fray Selma gave each full-fledged member a wooden RAY cross with the Latin inscription, “Cor unum in Deum”, which means “With one heart towards God.”

Fray Palagtiosa said the RAY “aims to form the modern youth with the Augustinian Recollect spirituality” amidst the dynamism of the highly secularized world today. “We are aware of the important role the young people play in the writing of our history as a people, and so we do our best in helping them,” Fray Palagtiosa said. “The RAY as an organization will provide them with opportunities to grow into responsible and responsive citizens of the future.”

The 13th national gathering of RAY members had for its theme, “I am RAY: A Message and a Messenger.”



RAY de Caidiocan: Watchful and Alert

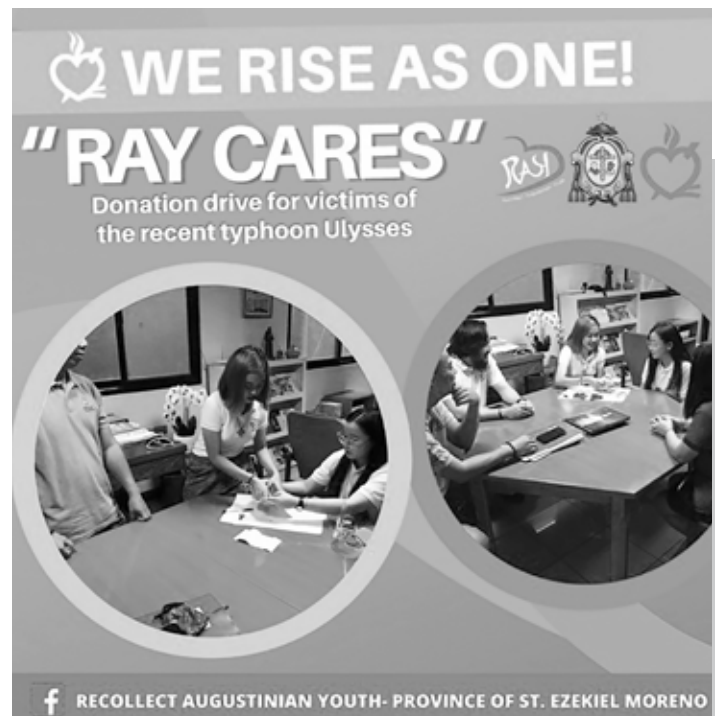
CAIDIOCAN—The pandemic scattered many but at the same time gathered some. An example is the RAY de Caidiocan which in launching the “Be watchful, Be alert!” service gathered members to help ensure that health protocols are observed during the liturgical activities of St. Ezekiel Moreno Quasi Parish in Brgy. Caidiocan. They were tasked to conduct temperature check; implement social distancing; and list up all massgoers for contact tracing. Their assistance is also a way to renew their commitment to listen, to be attentive and to respond the needs of the Church and the community.

RAY de Filipinas donates P51.9K for typhoon victims

QUEZON CITY—Last November 18, 2020, Roceline Bernal, RAY de Filipinas National President, together with Cyrine Julianne Singson, National Treasurer of RAY de Filipinas, handed over donations of P 51,920.25 to Fray Raymund Rueann Alcedo, OAR, ARCORES Filipinas coordinator and to Fray Dexter D. Palagtiosa, OAR, RAY National Youth Coordinator. The money will be used to help families affected by typhoon Ulysses specially those not yet reached by relief operations. We RISE as ONE! Onwards, RAY de Filipinas!

RAYS as sanitation ministers

TALISAY CITY—Members of RAY de Talisay at the start of the COVID pandemic volunteered to join other members of mandated organization to act as sanitation ministers. They took charge of ensuring that parishioners wear face-shields, masks and staying far apart from each other. They also took the temperature of massgoers and ensure that they sanitize their hands.



“tRAYbute” to frontliners

URBIZTONDParish-Recoletos O --The crisis brought by COVID-19 has been so alarming. But in times of crisis like this, the spirit of BAYANIHAN always lives.



RAY de Pangasinan, led by president Angelika Perez and the Spiritual Director, Fray Cristito Rey Tepace, OAR, did a “tRAYbute” to the frontliners (barangay health workers and civic volunteer organization) by giving them free meals last May 9, 2020.

The fund used for this project was taken from the money raised from the Palaspas Online-Selling and other fund-raising activities of RAY de Pangasinan.

“Maraming maraming salamat po mga frontliners dito sa barangay namin (Pasibi East). Nawa’y magustuhan nyo ang simpleng handog namin upang kahit papaano ay maibalik namin ang lahat ng sakripisyo nyo sa amin. (To all our frontliners from Brgy. Pasibi East, thank you. May our simple gifts reflect our gratitude for all the sacrifices you have done for us,” said Perez.

Living the Augustinian way: “One heart, one soul towards God,” Our Lady of the Visitation made the first wave of donations to needy parishioners through the leadership of the Parish Priest, Fray Joseph Cyprian Panaligan, OAR; Local Prior, Fray Samson Silloriquuez, OAR; and PPC Coordinator, Sis Perlita Narag.



Armed with scanners, wearing face shields and masks, RAYsters do their job as sanitation ministers.

Youth told: Witnessing outweighs preaching

BAGUIO CITY — If there is anyone who can be the best preacher of the Gospel at this age, it is the youth. according to Fray Bernard C. Amparado, OAR in his homily during the first day of the 13th Recollect Augustinian Youth National Summit (RAYNS). “Do you expect our old bishops to come up with initiatives that would appeal to the youth of today who do not go to Church or know Christ?” Fr. Amparado asked the 159 Recollect Augustinian Youth (RAY) delegates from 20 Recollect communities from all over the country who gathered at Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary (CaReS) from Jan. 20 to 24, 2020. “This task falls on your lap. This is your generation, and you are the best speakers of your age,” Fray Amparado, Rector of CaReS told the participants.

The Father Rector gave the RAY delegates two practical tips on how to spread the Gospel among their peers. He said spreading the Word of God can be done by preaching with words and/or giving witness through their lives. Of the two, he said that “witnessing through your lives is more important and more effective than preaching with words.”

People are wary of preachers who do not live what they preach, as hypocrisy turns people off, he said. “To be a messenger of God’s Word, you need to live your life in such a way that you become the message itself,” he said. “The messenger should become the message.” Giving witness, moreover, is valuable, he stressed, because it “awakens in those who sleep curiosity in the Gospel and the Truth Who is Jesus himself.”

The task is hard, Fr. Amparado said, but it should be a source of great joy for the RAY. “It is never easy to follow the Lord who asks us to deny ourselves, carry the cross, and give up our lives in His service. But to be invited to be his disciple is a great



honor and privilege because the invitation itself is the guarantee of our salvation,” he told the delegates.

He added: “If we follow the call, we no longer receive gifts but we become the gift itself — for the Church and for the world.”



OAR WORLD ...

Alto Xingu-Tucumã Prelature receives its Augustinian Recollect Bishop

Agustinos Recoletos • February 11, 2020

Bishop Jesús María López Mauleón, OAR took possession of the newly created Episcopal See in the Amazonian territory in Brazil.

BRAZIL—The new Augustinian Recollect Bishop, Most Rev. Jesús María López Mauleón, DD, OAR, already worked in the prelature that has been entrusted to him in the Amazonian territory. The bishop, of Navarrese origin, took possession last Sunday, February 9, 2020 the Episcopal See as the new prelate of Alto Xingu-Tucumã. The new prelature was created by Pope Francis and separated from the original Xingu Prelature. As in his episcopal ordination in Fortaleza, hundreds of people were gathered to witness Fray Lopez Mauleón's episcopal

ordination; this time they were the same faithful of the new prelature, who went to the Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora, in Tucumã (Para, Brazil).

The new bishop, appointed November 6, took more than three months to take possession of the new prelature that faces dozens of needs, including the defense of indigenous peoples. One of the most exciting moments of the Eucharist was in the offertory, when several indigenous people offered their customs, traditions and their way of life to the altar, and embraced the Augustinian Recollect Bishop.

The Prior General of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, Fray Miguel Miró, OAR, and the Priors Provincial of San Nicolás de Tolentino and Santo Tomás de Villanueva Provinces, and other Augustinian Recollect bishops and religious were present in this celebration. He presented them all to the faithful as his family.

He presented himself to his new parishioners as a bishop who is not wise,

*Alto Xingu-Tucumã Prelature
receives its Augustinian Recollect
Bishop*



without titles, human wisdom or an eloquent word but has with him “the Word of Jesus Christ, who died and risen from the dead”, referring to his episcopal motto ‘Servants of your Word’. And, he said, “all my life has been a fruit of God’s mercy.”

“I discovered in the Gospel that we have to preserve the values of the Kingdom, specifically in the Amazon which is full of biodiversity and that gives life to the entire Planet.” That is why he called for the practice of justice, “which is not incompatible with worship and prayer.”

He endorsed the phrase of St. Augustine: “With you I am a Christian, for you, a Bishop.” “The most important wealth is faith, it is what unites and dignifies us,” said Bishop López Mauleón.

He also recalled the past Synod of the Amazon held in Rome in October 2019. On this, he affirmed that the prelature awaits the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis. “We are open to comprehensive conversion,” he said.

(translated from the original Spanish article posted in the official website of the Order of Augustinian Recollects: www.agustinosrecoletos.com)

Communion in the Augustinian family

Agustinos Recoletos • February 19, 2020

The General Councils of the Augustinians, Augustinian Recollects and Discalced Augustinians met in February 2020 to work on improving the sense of fraternity and family.

ROME—On February 14, 2020, the general councils of the three Augustinian orders—Order of St. Augustine, Order of Augustinian Recollects and Order of Discalced Augustinians—met in Rome starting a path of communion and collaboration to disseminate the thought and spirituality of Saint Augustine.

Earlier, they have started in Spain and Brazil, common initiatives in education. The leaders discussed the reality of the teachings of St. Augustine.

The main objective of the meeting was to emphasize two dimensions: ‘ad intra’, to reinforce the Augustinian charism of interiority and community, and ‘ad extra’, to transmit the wealth of the thought of St. Augustine for the service of the Church and evangelization.

The three Augustinian orders are promoting the cause of the proclamation of Saint Thomas of Villanueva as Doctor of the Church. The General Councils have committed themselves to meet at least once a year and to promote common celebrations.



The Priors General. Fray Miguel Miró, OAR, Fray Alejandro Moral, OSA, and Fray Doriano Ceteroni, OAD



Dialogue, pursuit and culture: the corporate image of 2021

Agustinos Recoletos • August 6, 2020

The Order of Augustinian Recollects has presented the logo of the guideline for the year 2021 in pastoral ministries, educational centers, communities and missions.

Simple and clear. This is the logo of the pedagogical-pastoral directive for 2021 'Creators of spaces of dialogue with the world and contemporary culture'.

Creators of spaces of dialogue with the world and contemporary culture' has been summarized in three key words that symbolize the directive and appear in the logo: dialogue, pursuit and culture.

The Prior General explained it in the presentation sent to the religious: "Since the topic is complex, it seemed appropriate to us to synthesize it in three words, which offer the opportunity to focus on three dimensions of our charism and mission". The three words appear in different colors (red, gold and dark grey) and overlap one another, accompanied by a box indicating the year. With the typeface, the colors and the layout, the Order intends to give an image of diversity, culture and modernity.

Dialogue, pursuit and culture are three important dimensions of the Augustinian Recollect charism and they are intended to be the contribution of the Augustinian Recollects to the world, especially in these delicate times that society is going through. The image and the guideline

will be used in 2021, although in some places, like Spain or Mexico, where the course starts in September, work will begin with this image. It will appear alongside the official corporate image of the Order of Augustinian Recollects in digital formats, stationery or posters, among others. The logo will also be used by the different secretariats and commissions, adapting it to their own reality while respecting its form.

Dialogue has its roots in the Augustinian thought of becoming a participant in the life of the other, understanding the other, putting ourselves in the place of the other (empathy) and, from there, sharing what we have and allowing ourselves to be enriched by the contributions of others. Dialogue means openness to novelty, which is learning to unlearn in order to re-learn, to resilience, to creativity in the face of situations of uncertainty and knowing how to read the signs of the times.

The pursuit (of the Absolute Good) is one of the most outstanding aspects of the Augustinian Recollect spirituality. It uncovers our restlessness, dynamism, and interiority. "Do not go outside, but enter into yourself; the truth dwells in the interior of man" (De Vera Religione, 39, 72). This

pursuit invites us to welcome the newness of each day without losing the essence that defines us and whose foundation we find in God.

Culture speaks to us of encounter, of having bridges, of opening ourselves to the diversity of persons and contexts where we live. Culture also reminds us of the valuable legacy we have received and the responsibility we have to transmit it. “The Order of Augustinian Recollects is, with full rights, heir to the religious family founded by St. Augustine. The spiritual patrimony of the Order

is the life, doctrine and Rule of St. Augustine, the Forma de Vivir and our healthy traditions, as well as the examples of holiness and the care for the kingdom of God of so many religious who, throughout the centuries, have given splendor to the great Augustinian family” (Const. 7). As sons of St. Augustine we are called to contribute to the cultural development of our time, to allow ourselves to be enlightened and enlightened by the richness of our lives and tradition.

Logo for 2020 pastoral directive

Agustinos Recoletos • January 21, 2020

The Augustinian Recollects presented the visual image that represented the guideline for 2020: “We are prophets of the Kingdom: poor, social projects and peripheries”. The image is in the three languages of the Order and is meant to be the graphic representation of the pastoral priority proposed by the Prior General.

The symbolism of the logo

The logo was designed by Augustinian Recollect Rafael Nieto and used in digital and social networks or documents. The objective is to recall the prophetic and missionary vocation of

the Augustinian Recollects; the proclamation of the Gospel and its realization in the person of the most vulnerable is a task that, as prophets, must be done by religious, laity and young people who live the Augustinian Recollect charism.



The image has three elements, each one with its concrete meaning. The hands represent prophecy; raised hands that denounce and announce, that help and commit. The stars symbolize the Kingdom of God, the goal towards which the efforts marked by the prophetic hands are directed. And, finally, the diversity of colors reflects the diversity of the world, the peripheries, the different types of poverty, the variety of ideas, of criteria... and in that varied world there are also the Augustinian Recollects.

The poor, a priority for 2020

The poor, the social projects and the peripheries are the great axes of the apostolate of the Order of Augustinian Recollects for

this year. All sections of the Augustinian Recollect apostolate will carry out their pastoral, social and educational activities during these months following the guideline set by the General Curia for 2020: “We are prophets of the Kingdom: poor, social projects, peripheries”.

The purpose of 2020 focuses its attention on the most needy and the poor, following the line of Pope Francis. The objective is to make known, from the different ministries, the social work carried out by the Augustinian Recollects, to mark the poor as a priority and to reinforce the value of justice in solidarity. Faced with the

challenge of social exclusion, injustice and the proliferation of a culture of death, the Order of Augustinian Recollects is committed to mercy, the public defense of denied values, the option for the excluded and the esteem of interculturality.

This image is compatible with the images and slogans that have already been used for months in the educational apostolate or youth and vocation ministry, which have been adapted to their specific contexts. Both will coexist during this period.

Prior Provincial of Sto. Tomas on the 75th year of OAR presence in Chota, Peru

Nicolás Vigo.

(This article was translated from the original Spanish article posted on the website of the Province of Sto. Tomas de Villanueva [recoletosstv.com])

Fray Miguel Ángel Hernández, Prior Provincial, sent a message of greetings to the entire Province for the closing of the activities that celebrated the 75th anniversary of the arrival of Augustinian Recollects in Chota (Cajamarca, Peru). The plans to celebrate this important event were slated for January 7 to September, 2020 but the coronavirus pandemic forced the celebrations online.

75 years ago

The Prior Provincial of Santo Tomás de Villanueva recalled the situation in the Peruvian province 75 years ago, when the first missionaries settled in it: “The Lord, through the necessary human mediations, had the brilliant idea of thinking about the Augustinian Recollects to his vineyard. The Lord knew them well and was aware of their generosity, their courage, their dedication and their availability. And there it was the religious of the Province of San Nicolás who would immediately pass the witness of the evangelization of those lands to the newly created Province of San José.

The Effort of the First Missionaries

The religious highlighted in his message the evangelizing work that the friars implemented and the effort they had to go to town, which, at that time, had no roads or means of communication: “The Recollect missionaries traveled on mules and horses to each and every corners of that mountain range. It was necessary to reach every one of the villages, no one could be left out, everyone had to receive the Proclamation of the Gospel and know from the missionaries that this town is a people loved by God. For them neither the abysses nor the precipices of the mountains mattered, nor the stones that frequently fell off

the slopes and slopes of the mountains with the risk of life for those who live along those battered roads; Nor did the cold and the rain matter, nor the scorching sun that at that altitudes close to three thousand meters burns you mercilessly.”

Likewise, it highlighted the joy with which the friars in black habit did their evangelizing work in the peasant communities: “There was so much passion, enthusiasm, dedication, fearlessness and joy that the missionaries put into the evangelizing work that the Lord trusted that faith quickly took root in that town and the abundant fruits of a job well done were not long in coming.



The missionary company

He also highlighted the organization that they deployed in the evangelizing work and the fruit it gave in the short and long term: “I have heard many times about the work carried out by our friars with the catechists: they were such a well-trained and organized army that they became leaders of their rural communities and trained the other members of the community; prepared the celebrations; and proclaimed and explained the Word of God. Today we speak of multipliers, but they were already present at that time our forefathers with the catechists who knew how to multiply the presence of the Church in the midst

of each small town, no matter how small. The evangelizing work of our friars has deserved the recognition of many bishops of Peru who have tried to imitate and implant in their Dioceses the same method of work that was so effective for us.

The vocational fruits

Fray Miguel Ángel also refers to the vocational spring that has occurred in the Prelature of Chota and Cutervo, as a product of the religious formation that the Augustinian Recollect friars have given during these decades. On this, he said: “The vocational fruits confirm us that the friars left their mark in the mission of Chota. In

the celebration of the 50 years of the Prelature, there were already more than 50 priests, among religious and diocesan priests, not counting the numerous vocations of religious sisters. Today the priests of the Prelature are scattered throughout the country, helping many other dioceses. At this moment we have twelve Augustinian Recollect religious from Chota and Cutervo,

who curiously are distributed in the five areas of the Province.”

Five Augustinian Recollect bishops

Likewise, he mentioned the work of the Augustinian Recollect bishops that the Prelature has had, who are admired for their pastoral work: “Our bishops always enjoyed the admiration of the Peruvian episcopate, being called on several occasions to occupy positions of responsibility in the Episcopal Conference and to take charge of other Dioceses of the country: Bp. Emiliano in Chachapoyas, Bp. Carmelo in Cajamarca, Bp. Fortunato in Chota and some time ago also as

secretary of the Conference of Bishops.

Social work

Social work and human promotion in the province of Chota has been one of the friars' priorities. Thanks to the Order's help and international cooperation, much work has been done to alleviate the effects of structural poverty. On this, the superior of the Augustinian Recollects of Santo Tomás de Villanueva, said: "Social commitment has always been present in the work of integral evangelization of our friars, in few places of the Recollect geography, the presence of Haren Alde and currently the ARCORES has been so strong and decisive in the social development of a region: latrines, kitchens, bridges, roads, cooperatives



work in the Prelature is the Santa Mónica Radio, which has just completed 27 years of existence and that in these places where communication is so complicated, where loneliness in the middle of these mountains reaches worrying dimensions, where transportation is so difficult. Santa Mónica Radio is an instrument of formation at the service of life and evangelization. It is an avenue for the evangelization and denunciation, it is a pleasant companion for those who feel alone, it is the church entering through its waves in each home and in every heart and bringing current news, Christian formation, entertainment, prayer, etc. to all listeners. We are very proud of the courage of those first friars who knew how to pick up the witness that the Church entrusted us to seek new methods and new forms of evangelization, new ways of reaching people to carry the message of the Gospel and embarked on this passionate adventure of advertising on the radio."



and a myriad of social enterprises that do not seek but to try to make our people of Chota live with the greatest possible dignity, because what our friars have always wanted for their people is that they have life and life in abundance."

The influence of radio

Likewise, he highlighted the evangelizing and cultural work of Santa Mónica Radio: "And a fundamental, decisive piece and I would dare to say that a determining factor in the evangelization

Santa Monica Parish and ARCORES

The Augustinian Recollect missionaries, in the last decades, when Chota already had the necessary indigenous clergy, were handing over the parishes and leaving their administration to the diocesan priests. This historical fact was also collected by the prior provincial: "And after having handed over all the parishes of the

Prelature to the bishop and the diocesan clergy, the friars decided to leave the last bastion, the parish of the cathedral and go to the peripheries of Chota, where today the parish of Santa Mónica and the social center of ARCORES stand.”

And, finally, he thanked God for these 75 years of evangelization and mutual enrichment,

for evangelizers and the evangelized : “This jubilee is a thanksgiving to God for this history so full and filled with blessings and in which for 75 years our friars have been evangelized by the small and poor people of these Peruvian lands,” he concluded.



Caption: The Argentine couple wanted to contribute their music to the virtual Eucharists celebrated during the quarantine of the pandemic, something they did before the COVID-19.

Vanina and Adrian: Music for the virtual Eucharist

Augusto Uriarte

This article is taken from the official website of the Order of Augustinian Recollects (agustinosrecoletos.com)

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist did not stop in Argentina despite the eight months of quarantine against COVID-19. The parishes used digital tools enabling the faithful to continue celebrating their faith in community, albeit virtually. It was first done through Facebook and later Zoom allowing priests to celebrate Mass with the virtual accompaniment of their faithful.

This is how Vanina and Adrián, a couple from the Parish of Saint Joseph, of the Order of Augustinian Recollects in Villa Maipú (Buenos Aires) began to sing for the Zoom celebrations along with other musicians from the Parish of Our Lady of Luján.

“We were watching the Mass on Facebook and it was our desire to participate in it,” they say. They add that they believe that “God uses people to call us. In this case, it was the couple Roxana and Aurelio, who belong to the community of San José, who proposed to participate in this challenge.

“It was a new experience and the first meetings, we were nervous”; but they did not let themselves be overcome by nerves because “the emotion of wanting to offer all the best and that the screen is not an obstacle to put our gift (of music) at the service of God, since He is the center of everything”, they add.

When they joined the WhatsApp group, composed of faithful from the Parroquia Nuestra Señora de Luján (who did not know them) and some from their Parroquia (San José), they felt welcomed from the first moment: “The whole community of the Parroquia de Luján received us in a very affective way, making us feel comfortable at all times,” they comment.

They have been doing this beautiful service of music that they offer to God for about 25 years, since they have always been singing in their parishes since they were very young. “Adrian belonged to the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Ciudadela and I belonged to the Community of San José in Villa Maipú, Buenos Aires”, specifies Vanina.

They met at the National Youth Meeting in 2003, in Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos Province, Argentina. “In 2005 we got married and from there, we started to serve together in the San José Parish”, specifies Vanina. Finally, they add that “each mass is an opportunity to transmit God’s love from music”.

OBITUARY



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Fray Casiano Cosmilla, OAR

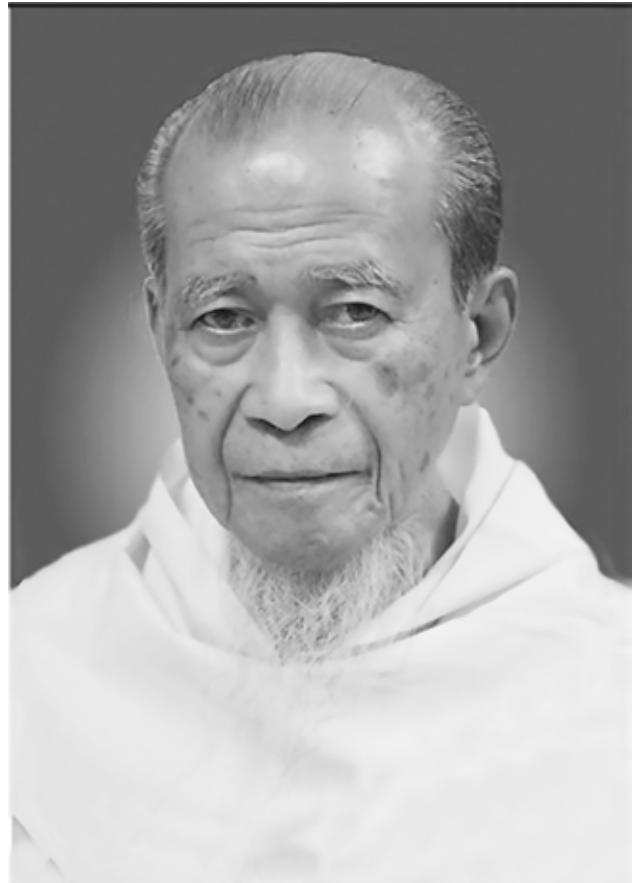
1937-2020

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
RECOLLECT FAMILY

It is my sad duty to relay to you this notice that, at 7:10 a.m. of January 5, 2020, FRAY CASIANO AMBULO COSMILLA, OAR, passed away at the age of 82 at the Adventist Hospital in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan due to septic shock and community-acquired pneumonia. He has also been suffering from chronic kidney disease and chronic congestive heart failure.

"Father Kizzy," as he is fondly called by his confreres and friends, was born on August 13, 1937 in Pandan, Antique. In 1954, he finished his Basic Education in his hometown. He was already a college student in 1955 when he, together with other 10 candidates, entered the Colegio Apostólico [Minor Seminary] de Sto. Tomas de Villanueva in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. The succeeding two years (1956-58) of minor seminary formation program was spent at San Jose Seminary in Quezon City where he would later complete his three-year philosophical studies (1958-61). Then, in 1961, he entered the novitiate in Monteagudo, Navarra, Spain where he made his simple profession of vows on July 6, 1962. From 1962 to 1966, he immersed himself in theological studies at the Recoletos Theologate in Marcilla (Navarra, Spain) where he pronounced his solemn profession on July 6, 1965 and, four months after, on November 21, he was ordained a deacon. On July 17, 1966, also in Marcilla, he received his presbyteral ordination at the hands of Most Rev. Arturo Quintanilla.

Having spent more than 57 years as religious, and more than 53 years as a priest, Father Kizzy, also known as "Father Gwapo" to many, for tagging himself, in jest, as "Patron ng mga Gwapo" ("Patron Saint of the Good-Looking"), has been in pastoral assignments practically the rest of his life after his priestly ordination. From 1966 to 1968, he was the Assistant Sacristan – one whose basic duty was to help the Rector – of the San Sebastian Basilica in Manila. The next 19 uninterrupted years (1968-87) was dedicated to a fruitful parish ministry in what



was then Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan. He was based at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral-Parish in Puerto Princesa as its Assistant Parish Priest or Parochial Vicar (1968-70) and, later, as its Parish Priest (1970-87).

Towards the end of 1987, he was transferred to the Recollect community of Talisay City, Negros Occidental. For about two months, until January 31, 1988, he was the acting Parochial Vicar of the San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish. From February 1 of that same year up to 1994 – a span of two triennia – he was appointed Parish Priest of the said parish and Local Prior of the community. For some months in 1991, he took charge of the office of the School Director of the erstwhile University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos – Talisay (now: Colegio San Nicolas de Tolentino-Recoletos) which was part of the community's apostolate. But for him, one of the most memorable events while in Negros was when he was among the three friars chosen to represent the then Vicariate of the Philippines and China to witness the beatification rites of Blessed Martín de San Nicolás and Melchor de San Agustín in Rome on April 23, 1989.

As an upshot of the June 1994 Provincial Chapter of the then Province of San Nicolas de Tolentino to which the former Vicariate of the Philippines and China belonged, he was transferred to another pastoral environment: as the parish priest of the Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish in Tondo, Manila where he was also appointed as the local prior of the Recollect community.

After that triennium, in 1997, he was named local prior of the Recoletos de Laray community in Talisay City, Cebu and, at the same time, parish priest of the Our Lady of Consolation Parish-Recoletos. Ever consistent with his pastoral management style of bringing the Church to the people, here he also multiplied the number of chapels and continued giving "Samaria Cursillo"-type of classes on Catholic Faith to some groups. Father Kizzy stayed in Cebu until early 2000 when the transition to the new administration was ushered in by the very first Provincial Chapter of the newly-established Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno.

With his new patente dated February 1, 2000, and six more thereafter, each every three years – which assigned him "to reside and work in the Recollect Community of San Sebastian College-Recoletos, Manila," his home for almost 20 years until his demise – Father Kizzy would be carrying out relatively lighter tasks. For nine years (2000-2009), he was the Parochial Vicar of the San Sebastian Parish; a third local councilor for a term (2012-2015); and Assisting Priest and Confessor of the AR Sisters since 2018. He was also appointed since 2007 as the Extraordinary Confessor of the seminarians of Casiciaco Recoletos Seminary in Baguio City, and Extraordinary Confessor & Spiritual Director of the three Recoletos seminaries in Luzon since 2015. His natural wit, wisdom and fatherly presence have helped our formands in their vocation discernment process.

Remarkably, it was also in San Sebastian where his personal milestones took place: his 75th birthday and his golden anniversary as religious in 2012, during which he never missed to include the feast day of St. Augustine, "my personal patron" (since his religious name was actually Fray Casiano A. Cosmilla de San Agustín), and his golden anniversary as a priest in 2016.

Although his return to San Sebastian Manila where his religious assignment began more than five decades ago means that Father Kizzy has come full circle, he actually wished to die and be buried in Palawan. In an interesting twist of events, his wish

was partly granted. Having secured a clearance from his physician to travel to Cebu to participate in the ARSE (Augustinian Recollect Spiritual Exercises) of the third batch in Cebu City on November 11-15, 2019, he was able to use the same document to be able to fly to Palawan in November 26 and to concelebrate in the Holy Mass for the 6th Bugsayan Festival on November 30 at Puerto Princesa City Coliseum, with the outgoing apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Gabrielle Caccia, as the presider; to meet and bond with some old friends; and to see, for one last time as we note it now, those places that reminded him of his pastoral past. In mid-December, he was confined at the Adventist Hospital until he breathed his last on January 5, 2020, solemn feast of the Epiphany. He received the last sacraments.

Father Kizzy excelled in generosity and solicitude especially towards those in need regardless of their economic status. And whenever he would be on the receiving end of other people's kindness, he never failed to say or send his profuse thanks. He also showed special concern for the employees or lay personnel particularly when they are sick or celebrating their birthday, for instance.

In the Recollect communities he was assigned, he did not hesitate to speak his mind even if some of the brothers found his opinions unconventional. Although he could be a nonconformist at times in his view of things, by thinking outside the box, by posting in his door some personally-crafted quotes suggestive of some current events in the Church or the Order, and by seeing the hilarious side of religious-priestly life, he would try his best, even if it meant putting things in writing – with his distinctive cursive handwriting fonts – to patch things up with a brother, or the community, or the proper authority concerned. And when tasks called for teamwork, he was available to offer help.

We pray then for our brother, Father Kizzy, that God who is rich in mercy welcome him in His Kingdom where, with the three wise men, he will adore the Lord eternally.

In St. Ezekiel Moreno,

Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR
Prior Provincial

Fray Jose Ernil Almayo, OAR
Provincial Secretary

Fray Emilio Loberiza Larlar, Jr., OAR 1939-2020

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
RECOLLECT FAMILY

Saddened yet full of hope, we relay to you this notice that our brother, FRAY EMILIO LOBERIZA LARLAR JR., OAR, passed away in the early hours of September 13, 2020, a Sunday, at the St. Ezekiel Moreno Provincial Center, Quezon City (Philippines). He succumbed to sudden cardiac arrest, occasioned by COVID-19. He was 80 years old, 59 years of which was spent in the religious life and 55 years as a priest.

Fray Emil was born on November 14, 1939 in Bago City, Negros Occidental. After graduating from Lambunao Elementary School in Lambunao, Iloilo, in 1952, he became a Recollect seminarian at the age of 12 by entering, on that year, the erstwhile Colegio Apostólico (Minor Seminary) de Sto. Tomás de Villanueva in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. Together with his batchmates, he continued his seminary formation at San Jose Seminary in Quezon City until he graduated in 1956. In that same Jesuit-run seminary, he also obtained his AB Philosophy in 1960.

He, and two other Filipino postulants, entered the novitiate in Monteagudo (Navarra, Spain) where they took the Recollect habit on July 4, 1960. For his part, he took the religious name Fray Emilio Larlar de San Juan Vianey. On July 5 of the following year, he made his simple profession of vows in the same convent. Then, for his four-year theologate, he proceeded to Marcilla (also in Navarra, Spain) where he made his solemn profession of vows on July 5, 1964; diaconal ordination on January 10, 1965; and presbyteral ordination on July 18, 1965. He received both sacred orders, including the minor orders, from the hands of the Recollect bishop, Most Rev. Arturo Quintanilla.

As a newly-ordained priest, Father Emil's first assignment was at San Sebastian College- Recoletos in Cavite City. Here, he was the School Chaplain, from 1965 to 1967, and the High School Principal, from 1967 to 1969. He was then transferred to the Recollect parish community in San Juan de Bolbok, Batangas to be its assistant parish priest for a year, from 1969 to 1970. The next 12 years (1970-1982) would see him



living his consecrated life in Madrid, Spain. He was assigned as the chapel in-charge or sacristan of the Provincialate community in Paseo de la Habana, and did apostolate as teacher in Gaztambide.

From 1982 to 1985, he lived and worked in Mexico City (Mexico) as assistant parish priest of the Parroquia Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. The succeeding three triennia (1985-1994) would be a continuing immersion in pastoral ministries, but this time, in the Recollect parishes in USA: as parish priest of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Deming, New Mexico (1985-1988); as assistant parish priest of Parroquia de Cristo Rey in El Paso, Texas (1988-1991); as assisting priest and vocation promoter residing at Casa de San Alipio in Mesilla, New Mexico (1991-1993); and as a member of the newly-established community of Parroquia de San Antonio, also in New Mexico, but he was particularly assigned as parish priest of the St. Thomas More Parish in Chaparral (1993-1994).

In 1994, after 24 years of apostolic works abroad, Father Emil returned to the Philippines where he would spend the remaining 26 years of his religious-priestly life.

From 1994-1999, which covered the transition of the Vicariate of the Philippines and China to being the Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno, he was the Local Prior of the community of the University of San Jose-

Recoletos, Cebu City, and, at the same time, the Vice President for Finance of USJ-R.

With the establishment of the new Recollect community of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, he was appointed local prior and parish priest, from 2000 to 2003. For the next triennium, 2003-2006, he stayed at the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos in Bacolod City to be its local prior and the school's Vice President for Religious Affairs. With the extended apostolate in Barangay Handumanan, he was President of the Recoletos Social Outreach Center (RESOURCE) Foundation, Inc., from 2003 to 2007.

He was appointed local procurator and first councilor of the St. Ezekiel Moreno Novitiate-Recoletos (SEMONORE) in Antipolo City, from 2006 to 2009, and during this triennium, he was also appointed National Director of the Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF) and extraordinary confessor of the formands of Recoletos Formation Center in Miranila. Then, from 2009 to 2012, he became the local prior of SEMONORE in Antipolo.

From 2012 to 2015, he returned to the University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu City to be the vice-prior of the community and the Vice President for Administration of the university. During this triennium, he was also appointed as Director of the Talavera House of Prayer-Recoletos and Assistant to SARF Spiritual Director for the Visayas Area. But in 2014, the Prior Provincial, in line with the Prior General's concern for communications "liberated [him] from some of his office assignments and allowed him to have more time to translate documents, especially those that pertain to our ongoing formation."

For the triennium 2015-2018, he was transferred to the Provincial Curia and was appointed one of the official translators of the Province. He was also appointed as the National Spiritual Director of SARF-Philippines. But with the establishment of a new parish community (i.e., Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish) in Project 6, Cubao, Quezon City in July 2015, he was appointed as its local prior. After a year of service here, he was re-assigned to the Provincial Curia. Here he was able to focus on his other ministries as one of the confessors and spiritual directors of the Recollect seminaries in Luzon.

The beginning of the quadrennium 2018-2022 saw Father Emil staying put in the Provincial House as the local second councilor. He also continued with the tasks given to him previously: as one of the

official translators of the Province and extraordinary confessor of the Recollect seminaries in Luzon.

Father Emil, as a religious, has been very observant of common life. He valued silence, togetherness with the brothers during recreation, and punctuality in the performance of duties, particularly prayers in common. He kept his special devotions to Our Lady and the Sacred Heart. As a priest, he was disposed to do ministerial works wherever the proper authority would send him, much like his personal patron saint, St. John Marie Vianey. It was only in these later years that, because of physical illnesses, he was not given much work. Since 2018, the deacon assigned in the community has been designated to accompany him in his apostolate.

However, despite his fragile health, Father Emil would still spend fruitfully most of his free time in his room, doing translation works, in front of his computer. Last triennium, he has finished translating to English, among other minor works, the three-volume opus, with a total of more than 650 pages, of Fr. Francisco Moriones OAR's "Augustinian Recollect Spirituality." And just this August 2020, he has finished singlehandedly translating to English the Ritual of the Order of Augustinian Recollects, with a total of around 535 pages in the new layout.

Father Emil has still a lot of pending works in mind. He was also looking forward to celebrating the diamond jubilee of his religious life next year, and be the second Filipino Recollect to do so. But God has far greater plans for him. Far more beautiful yet mysterious. And his sudden demise somehow gave us a glimpse of those, and brought us a joyful reminder about this special moment in the earthly pilgrimage of every consecrated person "as reaching the beginning of that which is eternally new, in which the fullness of truth and love is revealed" (Add. Code 275).

We pray that our triune God who is rich in mercy and unmatched in goodness welcome our brother, Father Emil, to his heavenly abode where, together with the angels and the saints, he will forever rest, contemplate, love, and praise.

In St. Ezekiel Moreno,

Fray Dionisio Q. Selma, OAR
Prior Provincial

Fray Jose Enril F. Almayo, OAR
Provincial Secretary



ВРЕМЯ КОЛОСЫ

